Yellow-Wolf & Other Tales of the Saint Lawrence

Philippe-Joseph Aubert de Gaspé

Translated by Jane Brierley

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Yellow-Wolf & Other Tales
of the Saint Lawrence

Philippe-Joseph Aubert de Gaspé had become a well-known figure by the time this engraving was published in Benjamin Sulte's *Histoire des Canadiens-Français* (1882; vol. VI, p. 56). The engraving was based on a photograph of the author taken by Ellison & Co. of Quebec City at some time between 1863 and his death in 1871. C14256. *Public Archives of Canada.*

"YELLOW-WOLF & Other Tales of the Saint Lawrence"

BY

PHILIPPE-JOSEPH "AUBERT DE GASPÉ"

AUTHOR OF

Canadians of Old

and

A Man of Sentiment: Memoirs

Translated from the French and
Annotated by Jane Brierley

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Foreword to the First French Edition (1893)

In making this work public, it is perhaps appropriate to preface it with the following remarks:

I discovered the author's manuscript among family papers. Having read it to a few friends, I was advised by them to print it.

I hope that the reader will be kind enough to take into consideration the fact that these are the last writings of an octogenarian, who died before having had the opportunity to look them over.

The Editor

Preface

Divers is a collection of writings found by my great-uncle Alfred Aubert de Gaspé among the papers of his late father, my great-grandfather, Philippe Aubert de Gaspé.

In all four stories there is a sentiment which may appear exaggerated to modern ears but which was quite natural to de Gaspé's contemporaries and even more so to him, the gentlest of all men. His treatment of the Indian is more sensitive than might be expected from a man of his time: the Canadian of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, whatever his language, was clearly inclined to condemn or scorn the Indian — or, indeed, anyone else — for no good reason other than the hope thereby to pull himself up by his own bootstraps into a position of prominence to which his entitlement was doubtful. To de Gaspé, the last of our indigenous aristocrats

and an instinctively tolerant man, such thoughts were quite alien.

Throughout *Divers* we see the gentle old man at the end of his life, a man no longer with ambitions to satisfy, one who knows only affection for his fellow man rather than rivalry. *Divers* is the unpolished work of a man of old age, one buffeted by life but who remains without resentment where another would be bitter. Though it is a collection of unrevised papers probably devised for use in other writings, it sheds a gentle light on a man who was himself a gentleman in much more than the mere social sense of the word.

Louis de la Chesnaye Audette, O.C., Q.C.
Ottawa, 1989

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J.B.

Introduction

This collection of pieces by Philippe-Joseph Aubert de Gaspé (1786–1871) was published posthumously under the title *Divers* (Montreal: C.O. Beauchemin et fils, 1893). De Gaspé had become well known in old age as a result of his novel, *Les Anciens Canadiens* (1864) and his *Mémoires* (1866).

The author's son, Alfred-Patrice (1831–1907), tells us that he found these pieces among his father's papers. "Yellow-Wolf, Malecite Chieftain of Old" and "The Woman of the Foxes" appeared for the first time in *Divers*. Alfred noted that the other two, "General Wolfe's Statue" and "Big Louis and the Legend of Indian Lorette," had appeared previously in *Le Foyer Canadien*, a literary magazine published monthly between 1863 and 1866, and less regularly until 1879. The magazine and the people concerned with it were important

factors in encouraging de Gaspé's late-blooming gift for writing.[A]

Although Alfred de Gaspé pleaded his father's advanced age and the fact that the author had not revised the work for publication, the Montreal *Le Monde* commented in 1893 that, "We read these last works of an octogenarian in one sitting, and such as they are, more than one of our young fin-de-siècle writers would be happy to sign his name to them."[B]

Concerning posthumous publication of works, there appears to have been something of a tug of war between the historian, Abbé Henri-Raymond-Casgrain, and certain members of the family, particularly Alfred, with regard to the abbé's proprietary attitude toward de Gaspé's *oeuvre*. Casgrain seemed inclined to ascribe to himself the rôle of literary mentor and promoter of de Gaspé and his work, although the actual extent of his contribution is problematical. Queries as to his right to bring out posthumous editions of *Les Anciens Canadiens* were met with an evasive letter to "dear cousin" Alfred in October 1885. Perhaps as a result of this, the first edition of *Divers* pointedly included "first edition" in bold type on the title page, and overleaf

the prominently displayed information that the work had been "REGISTERED in conformity to the Act of Parliament of Canada, in the year eighteen hundred and eighty-three, by ALFRED AUBERT DE GASPÉ at the office of the Minister of Agriculture, at Ottawa."[C]

In editing his father's work, Alfred seems to have taken a custodial approach, preferring to let the text and author's footnotes stand as they were, with the insertion of a minimum of editorial footnotes, including one by the Abbé Cyprien Tanguay — possibly one of the friends to whom Alfred mentions showing the work.

Three of these pieces concern Amerindians, the remnants of a proud lineage, an aspect that de Gaspé emphasizes. Is there a parallel with his own situation as the last seigneur of Saint-Jean Port-Joli? De Gaspé's Canadian forebears included the intrepid entrepreneur, Charles Aubert de la Chesnaye, ennobled by Louis XIV for his services to the Canadian community, and the soldier-seigneur, Philippe-Ignace Aubert de Gaspé, Chevalier of the Royal and Military Order of Saint-Louis and a veteran of both the Indian Wars and the Seven Years' War in North America. The author's best-

known work, the novel *Les Anciens Canadiens*, evoked among other things the social watershed of the Conquest and the passing of the old order. Writing in the middle of the nineteenth century, although essentially an eighteenth-century man in spirit, he harkened back to what might well appear a more dignified age in comparison with the hustling industrial expansionism of the time. One can get a sense of the difference from popular engravings of "views" of Quebec City and the Saint Lawrence River between 1800 and 1870. The later scenes bristle with smokestacks instead of the graceful sailing craft and pensive Indians of an earlier day.

One of the most valuable aspects of de Gaspé's writing is his creative eye and ear, and his talent for imaginatively describing events and encounters in a way that makes them live for us once more. In the pieces included in this book, the author proves his ability to capture the ceremonial, almost biblical cadences of his Amerindian interlocutors. In a few places his Indians speak a broken French, but de Gaspé is careful not to labour this device. In translating these works, I have used the simple formality employed, for example, in John Richard-

son's rendition of Pontiac's speech in *Wacousta* (1832).

These pieces give us a sympathetic and sometimes rueful look at the Amerindian living in fairly close proximity to the white man. Interestingly enough, the author makes a point of portraying something of their spiritual heritage, and has his Indians protest at the incursion of the white man's values — Christianity, money, and brandy. Perhaps he is echoing the attitude of Abbé J.-B.-A. Ferland, a historian he knew and admired. Ferland's ethnological study of the Amerindians in his *Cours d'histoire du Canada* spoke of Indian "philosophers" and "theology," a quite unusual approach for a nineteenth-century historian.[D]

The piece entitled "General Wolfe's Statue" is odd man out in this collection. Nevertheless it gives us one last chance to enjoy de Gaspé's easy, discursive prose, much as we might if we happened to spend an evening in his company. It is written in the spirit of the Club des Anciens, an informal group whose members used to meet in Quebec City in the 1850s to discuss, record, and substantiate details about the Quebec of their youth.

In preparing this translation, I have taken a few

(but only a few) liberties with the text, bearing in mind that the author had no opportunity to proofread the contents before publication in book form. As with my translation of de Gaspé's memoirs (*A Man of Sentiment*), I have adopted a dual system of endnotes indicated in the text by numbers and letters respectively.

Jane Brierley
Montreal, 1990

"Yellow-Wolf"

TRANSLATOR'S ADVICE TO THE READER

There is a passage early in James Fenimore Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans or a Narrative of 1757* (1826) where Hawkeye, the white scout, tells Chingachgook that Palefaces are not in the habit of handing down their history orally to the young men of their communities, but of committing it to writing. Those who have no chance to read this writing are therefore ignorant of their people's history.

It is only in fairly recent times that oral history, as told by native peoples themselves, has been committed to writing in a systematic way. As an author in the mid-nineteenth century, de Gaspé was acutely conscious of the importance of recording traditions and impressions that would otherwise be lost forever. In "Yellow-Wolf" he gives us the portrait and memories of a lonely old Indian,

severed by the weight of years and his ancient beliefs from his Christianized fellow Malecites. Paradoxically, it is to the eighteen-year-old Paleface that the Indian entrusts his story, and de Gaspé tells it again for posterity.

One notable thing about de Gaspé is the conversational tone he adopts in his recital and the disarming simplicity of his style in comparison with that of the period. Even as the territories and traditions of the native peoples of northeastern North America were shrinking and fading, the romanticization of the Indian as a heroic figure in literature was moving into high gear, later to peter out in a spate of historical romances. The incorporation of native people as characters in fiction was fairly well established by the time de Gaspé began writing. In Canada, John Richardson's *Wacousta; Or, The Prophecy* (1832) contributed to the genre, portraying the gravely noble Ottawa chief, Pontiac, in a story otherwise rich in melodrama.

We know from de Gaspé's memoirs that he read with pleasure the novels of Sir Walter Scott and Captain Frederick Marryat, and it would be surprising if the historical novels of the immensely popular Cooper ("the American Scott") were not equally

appreciated, particularly one such as *The Last of the Mohicans*, which deals with an episode during the fighting between the French under Montcalm and British forces in the Lake Champlain area. Such novels abound in detailed description of the characters' appearance, and de Gaspé does the same in the opening paragraphs of Yellow-Wolf, but with a humorous twist that is at once a sardonic reference to the overly-romantic style of literary predecessors and a look forward to the realism of late nineteenth-century writers. Let no one be offended: the joke is on the Paleface as much as the Indian.

YELLOW-WOLF

Malecite Chieftain of Old

Among the Indians who camped each year on our beach during my childhood was an old Malecite[A] by the name of Yellow-Wolf. According to my father's calculations, taking into account this Indian's acquaintance with the men of yesteryear and the events he had witnessed, he must have been a hundred years old at the time. Yellow-Wolf was a great favourite with my family, and my father loved to get him talking about the adventures of his long career.

The old Indian was in the habit of pitching his wigwam at some distance from his fellows. He seemed to have little in common with them, exchanging but a few brief words with those he met. For their part, they seemed to feel more fear than friendship for him. He led a solitary life in their

midst, his only companion being a small, distinctly foxy-looking dog.

Ever sombre and meditative, Yellow-Wolf treated my childish advances with discouraging reserve. Witnessing my mischievous antics, he no doubt considered me a frivolous being, incapable of conducting a serious conversation. It wasn't until I reached the age of eighteen that I succeeded in overcoming his distaste for my company and gaining his friendship.

Yellow-Wolf presented a most imposing ruin — what was left of him after days of captivity and hours of horrible suffering at the stake, at the hands of enemies as versed in the art of torture as the Iroquois. He had lost none of his tall stature, and still walked, shoulders thrown back, with the fine bearing of a man of forty. True, he had one blind eye, but the eagle orb that remained still blazed forth when he became animated. He might have been a disciple of Molière's Toinette, who propounded the philosophy that having one eye plucked out only made you see more clearly with the other. His left hand had just the index finger and thumb left, but these two digits, separated though they might be from their brothers, were no

less prompt in their unfailing obedience to his behests.

As for Yellow-Wolf's lower regions, I had no way of assessing the damage. He tended to limp, despite efforts to hide it, and I am obliged to conclude that this infirmity was the result of his Iroquois enemies eating a few of his toes, after first smoking the nails in their *calumets* to pass the time.

The joys of indolence were dear to this savage of ancient lineage and noble race, and the rich gifts of the Crown to a great chief allowed him to indulge himself at will. One day I remarked how surprised I was that he didn't drink rum like his fellow Indians, and he told me that until the age of thirty he had been a drunkard. After he had gone on a two-week binge, his ancestor, the first Yellow-Wolf, had appeared to him in his sleep and forbidden him to taste firewater, which was poison to Redskins.

"The time had come," said the old chief. "I'd drunk up a hundred francs' worth of pelts, my gun, my canoe, and even my wife. I sold her to a Frenchman for a bottle of rum."

"You sold your wife, my brother? What a low thing to do!"

"It was the best deal I ever made," retorted the

Indian. "She was a no-good thief and an even bigger drunkard than myself. Ha! That Frenchman got more than he bargained for!"

"*Ma foi*, in that case I think you did well to let your friend the Paleface have her, my brother," said I. "But you married again to console yourself."

"Yes, and this time I was lucky. I married a good woman who gave me two fine boys, brave warriors. They were both killed at my side in a great battle against the English and their allies the Foxes. I revenged their deaths, but not enough. I still hear the voices of my children in the still of the night, in the raging storm and the waves lapping on the shore. Always I hear, 'Vengeance! Vengeance, my father!' "

There was a long pause, then the old man added, "*Hoa!* My heart is very heavy. To think I will never see my children again! Their mother made them Christians and they are with her in her heaven. I will hunt without them in my grandfather's paradise. He has never abandoned his grandson. When those dogs of Iroquois were torturing me, I called on him and he always came to my aid. But come and sit with me this evening and I'll tell you all about it."

A magnificent night greeted my arrival. Moon and stars seemed to dance in the waters of the Saint Lawrence, and I could hear the waves faintly breaking on the sandy beach only a few feet from the old Indian's wigwam. Some larks, disturbed in their sleep, stretched their wings and hopped about, uttering little cries as the water invaded the shore.

Yellow-Wolf was smoking meditatively at the door of his wigwam. At my approach his dog started up and barked, ears perked like steel blades. "*Que ci! Céna* — Come here, hound!" shouted the Indian without turning his head. The dog lay down obediently a few yards from his master, keeping a wild and malevolent eye firmly fixed on me. I sat down beside my aged friend. He said nothing for a few minutes, then commenced the story that follows.

"Long, long ago, before the Paleface had passed over the great lake in his giant ship to visit the Redskins, my grandfather Areskoueh[1] took the form of a yellow wolf. As he passed by a Malecite village he saw a young Indian girl, daughter of the voice of the woodlands, lakes, and mountains, and carried her off to a cave far, far away. He made her his wife, and she gave him a fine boy whom he named Yellow-Wolf. By the time the boy was six,

he was stronger than the men of our day and those who will come after us.

"Areskoueh said to his wife, 'Show our son how to make the voice of the woodlands, lakes, and mountains speak, and I will make him a great hunter and warrior.' And the child learned to make the voice of the woods, lakes, and mountains speak, and his father taught him to be a great hunter and a fearsome warrior.

"When Yellow-Wolf became a man, Areskoueh said to his wife, 'Go and take your son to the Malecites and he will become a great chief. When he digs up the hatchet, the earth and trees of the forest will tremble beneath the feet of the warriors who run to answer his call! At each new moon he will drink from the skull of one of the twelve enemy chiefs to die by his hand and whose scalps hang in his wigwam. But before going on the warpath[2] he will pray to his father, and Areskoueh will come to him in his sleep and say, "Go!" Yellow-Wolf will then set forth, and enemies will fall beneath his hatchet like dry leaves before the storm! My son Yellow-Wolf will burn many prisoners to thank Areskoueh.' "

What did he mean, said I, interrupting the

narrator, by the voice of the woodlands, lakes, and mountains?

"When you speak aloud on a calm evening, standing in front of your house, what do you hear?" was his reply.[B]

"*Parbleu!*" I exclaimed. "I hear the echo of the cape."

"Good!" retorted the old man. "Well, all the descendants of Yellow-Wolf know how to make the echo speak whenever they wish, day or night."

"Then make it speak now," was my rejoinder.

"No, no, Areskoueh would be angry. He has forbidden his children to make the echo speak except in moments of great peril."

Yellow-Wolf was a ventriloquist, as will be borne out by what follows.

"But it seems to me," I started to say, "you were in considerable peril when your enemies . . ."

"Let me speak," said the Indian. "Yellow-Wolf is very old, and clouds pass through his head. Things suddenly go dark, and he has difficulty finding the trail of his memories." I had to be content with this. Yellow-Wolf passed a hand over his brow two or three times, and continued his story.

Malecite hunting and fishing territory once stretched from the coastal and inland waterways of the Maritimes to the Lower Saint Lawrence opposite Tadoussac. Indians camped each year on the beach at the end of the de Gaspé seigneurie in Saint-Jean Port-Joli. Yellow-Wolf's wigwam would have looked much like those depicted in this watercolour of Malecite dwellings. William Robert Herries (1818–1845), "Indian Camp, New Brunswick," L:36.5; W:24.4. Beaverbrook Art Gallery, Fredericton, New Brunswick.

"The sun was sinking when Yellow-Wolf and his mother came to a large Malecite village after a week of walking. In the old days, the wigwam of the Malecite was always open to the stranger, as it is today. The men of old used to say, 'Come, my brother, rest from your labours in my wigwam, and my squaw will make a fine stew to satisfy your hunger.' But today the poor Malecite often has nothing to offer travellers but the shelter of his wigwam. In order to sell pelts, the Palefaces have seized our forests and destroyed the game that the Great Spirit put there to feed his children.

"Several Malecites offered the strangers the hospitality of their wigwams," continued the old man after this digression, "but mother and son thanked them and asked first to speak to the chiefs, warriors, and old men of the village.

"The council fire was lit, and the chiefs, warriors, and old men took their places, waiting silently for the strangers to deliver their message.

"Yellow-Wolf stayed by the entrance while his mother, being the one to speak, went in alone. 'Let the heart of the Malecite rejoice, for your sister brings you good news,' said she. 'Let the old men search their memories, and they will recall that a

young Malecite girl, the orphan of a great chief, was carried off by a wolf near this village.'

" 'My sister has spoken truly,' replied several old men of the council.

" 'My brothers remember well,' said the woman. 'Their sister who now speaks to them was the one carried off by the wolf.'

"The wise men of the council shook their heads at this and a great chief spoke these words: 'Wolves carry off young girls to eat them. My sister is lying.'

" 'My brother Malecites are easily amazed,' retorted the woman. 'Let them listen and then judge whether they are right in disbelieving the words of their sister.' The chiefs, old men, and warriors remained silent.

" 'The wolf carried the young squaw in his jaws a long way off,' continued the woman, pointing to the north. 'He said to the squaw, "Yellow-Wolf is Areskoueh, god of war. He has kidnapped you to be his wife, for you are the daughter of a great chief whom he loved, and you will be the mother of a race of formidable warriors!" '

"Then spoke Porcupine, a young Malecite and a great chief. 'My sister has fine words, but the words of a woman are as light as a feather on the wind.'

" 'Your sister will speak to Areskoueh,' replied Yellow-Wolf's mother, 'and he will answer her beneath the earth, in the sky, and under the water. Porcupine will open his ears and then he will believe his sister's words.' She stretched a hand toward the council fire, and a voice came forth crying, 'The wife of Areskoueh has spoken truly!' Then she lifted her hand toward heaven, and a voice descended crying, 'The wife of Areskoueh has spoken truly!' And she lowered her hand toward the river, where a voice arose crying, 'The wife of Areskoueh has spoken truly!' And all the chiefs, the old men, and the warriors cried, '*Hoa!* My sister has not lied.'

" 'Now that the chiefs, the old men, and the warriors believe their sister's word, will they let her bring in her son?' asked the woman. The men bowed their heads in assent.

"When Yellow-Wolf entered the council wigwam, the warriors cried out, '*Hoa!* Our brother is indeed the son of Areskoueh. Let him take his place in the council with his brother Malecites.'

" 'My brothers have spoken well and Yellow-Wolf thanks them,' replied the young man, 'but he will not sit in the Malecite council except as their great chief. When Areskoueh bade his son farewell,

he said, "Go, tell the Malecites, 'I am Yellow-Wolf, son of Areskoueh and grandson on my mother's side of Arena, great chief of the Malecites. By this double heritage I am your great chief.'

" 'My brother speaks as though to command, but Porcupine will not give up his place to any warrior,' retorted the great Malecite chief. 'Let Yellow-Wolf take second place, and he will still be a great chief.'

" 'My brother Porcupine has a great heart and has spoken like a warrior,' replied the young man. 'Yellow-Wolf would have scorned him had he given up his place like a coward. But Yellow-Wolf, too, has a great heart. He loves the Malecites and asks only to pitch his wigwam near his brothers and live in peace with them.'

"And so Yellow-Wolf set up his wigwam in the village of his brothers. The Malecites had never seen such a formidable hunter. His arrow could pierce the eagle in the clouds. He could crush the black bear's skull with his hatchet and carry the animal back to the village on his shoulder as though it were a young badger.

"Six moons did Yellow-Wolf live among the Malecites. Then early one morning he rose and said

to Porcupine, 'Let the great chief light the council fire, for his brother has solemn words.'

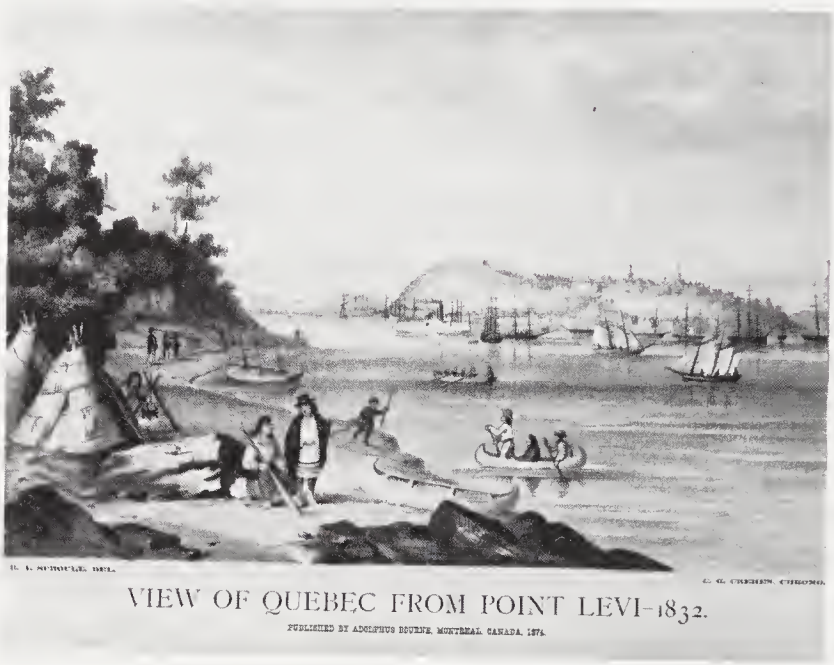
"The council assembled. 'Let my brother speak,' said the great chief.

" 'Areskoueh has visited his sleeping son,' said Yellow-Wolf, 'and has told him, "The Iroquois are advancing at great speed and their warriors are so many that the forest trembles beneath their feet! Before the sun has set three times, their war cry will be heard in the village of the Malecites." '

"The warriors smoked in silence, their hearts filled with sadness, for they knew the weakness of their tribe.

" 'Let my brothers open their ears and listen to the words of Yellow-Wolf, that their hearts may rejoice. Areskoueh has said to his son, "Go, and the dogs of Iroquois will fall beneath Yellow-Wolf's hatchet like dry leaves before the tempest!" Let the great chief strike the stake, call his warriors, and await the enemy a day's march from the Malecite village.'

"A great battle took place. The Iroquois, although taken by surprise, were so numerous that one would have thought the earth, trees, and rocks were spewing them forth like waves breaking upon



Indian summer encampments were a common sight along the Saint Lawrence below Quebec. De Gaspé was impressed by the strict but efficient economy of migrant Indians with their birchbark canoes. "A gun, a powder horn, a pouch of lead, a small kettle, a dog about the size of a fox, and a roll of birchbark made up the cargo." In little over an hour, the roll of birchbark had been turned into a comfortable wigwam, and the small Indian family had settled in to hunt and fish the forests and waterways. R.A. Sproule (C.G. Crehen, Chromo.), "View of Quebec from Point Levi — 1832." A.57.526.E. Musée du Québec. Photo: Neuville Bazin.

the shore when the Great Spirit is angry and makes the storm blow. Porcupine was soon killed, and the Malecites, losing heart after the death of their great chief, were about to flee when Yellow-Wolf revived their courage with a terrible shout that shook the forest. He fell upon the enemy, splitting their skulls with a crunch that could be heard above the ghastly yells on both sides. The old people named this battle the feast of the Iroquois dogs' split skulls.

"After the enemy's defeat, Yellow-Wolf was named great chief of the Malecite tribe. His children and grandchildren succeeded him, and the old man who now speaks to you is the last chief of this family of fearsome warriors, and also the last of his line."

"When you cut me off just now, my brother," I interposed at this juncture, "I was about to ask why you didn't make the echo speak when your enemies tortured you so cruelly."

"When moon and stars shine in the night," the old man retorted, "they light the steps of the wanderer. The blood runs fast in the veins of the young man and clears his mind, but in the head of the old man who has seen a hundred winters it is often dark, and he needs rest. Let my brother come

back tomorrow when Yellow-Wolf can speak once more."

I arrived punctually at our rendez-vous the next day.

"Yesterday evening," said the old man, "you asked me why I had not made the echo speak when my enemies tortured me. But Yellow-Wolf is a great warrior, you see, and he wanted to show those dogs of Iroquois that he cared nothing for their tortures. Listen, and I shall tell you of all this.

"For two weeks I had been hunting in the forest, and after a long tramp was very tired. Having seen no trace of the enemy, I went to sleep at the foot of a tree. I felt a blow and opened my eyes to find nearly a dozen Iroquois standing around me. They had taken my gun, hatchet, and knife.

" 'The Iroquois are great warriors!' I said, smiling scornfully. 'They are ten against one, yet they tremble at the sight of a sleeping Malecite and quickly seize his weapons. The Iroquois deserves the name "Fox," for he has its cunning and cowardice!'

" 'Yellow-Wolf would do well to call upon his grandfather Areskoueh before his enemies scalp him, burn him at the stake, and throw his bones to

their village dogs,' replied Timakai, the Iroquois chief.

" 'Yellow-Wolf has no need of his grandfather's aid,' I retorted. 'The knife that will scalp him is still in the Paleface's stores, and the wood that will burn him at the stake has not yet come out of the earth.'

"The Iroquois enemies shrugged and bound my hands. We set off and walked until nightfall, when they tied me to a tree and built a campfire. While they prepared supper Timakai lit his pipe and smoked the little fingernail of my left hand, biting the finger off at the knuckle and spitting it in my face. A second Indian did the same to the next finger and put it in my mouth."[C]

"That must have been very painful, my brother," said I. "Your face must have twisted in agony. Why didn't you make the echo speak?"

The old man drew himself up with great dignity. "Yellow-Wolf is a great warrior! If he had grimaced as much as a Paleface with a finger-scratch, his enemy would have been delighted."

Hoist on your own petard, Paleface! thought I.

"We set out again next day and walked until nightfall without stopping. They built a fire near a

little spring while I sat on the ground. While the meat cooked, another Iroquois smoked my third finger, chopped it up and laughed as he threw it to his dog. Now I had only two fingers on my left hand, and I needed them to support my gun. It was time to put an end to their games."

"I should think so, my brother," I remarked. "I admire your patience, but I swear I'd have put an end to their games from the moment they began smoking my first fingernail."

The old man looked at me pityingly. There was a moment of silence. "The Great Spirit created both Redskins and Palefaces, but he gave them different ideas," he said at last, and continued his account.

"I behaved just like a man about to fall sick — struggling to get up, heaving sighs, gasping and rolling on the ground, then lying perfectly still as though I'd lost consciousness. The Iroquois threw water in my face and I sighed like a man coming out of a fainting spell. 'Where am I?' I cried. My enemies burst out laughing. '*Hoa!* Yellow-Wolf boasted of being a man, yet he fainted like a young girl with a finger-bite.'

"I looked about me with a dazed expression and replied weakly, 'Yellow-Wolf was sick when the

enemy ambushed him. He had not eaten for three days, being unable to hunt, and he has had no food since being taken prisoner two days ago. His enemies have allowed him no water to quench his fever. If Yellow-Wolf dies, his only regret will be his failure to show the Iroquois they were nothing but women who didn't know how to torture a warrior.' And I pretended to faint again.

"The Iroquois threw water in my face once more, then untied me and gave me something to eat and drink. When I had finished, I imitated the sound of indistinct voices on the trail behind us, calling, 'Iroquois! Malecites! Malecites! Iroquois!' As my captors reached for their weapons in fear of an enemy attack, I let out a Malecite warhoop, grabbed the tomahawk hanging from Timakai's belt, and split his skull with a shout of triumph before disappearing in the direction of the voices. The night was dark, and I quickly hid behind a tree until the Iroquois had fled in the opposite direction. Then I went back for the weapons Timakai had taken. But before bidding him farewell, I also took his scalp. *Hoa!* Yellow-Wolf is a great warrior."

"Indeed you are, my brother," said I, "and a warrior with little regard for his own skin."

"In time of war we must always be on the watch for ambush when hunting in the forest," the old man went on. "Each nation has war parties continually on the prowl. During the day the hunters spread out but they agree on a meeting place for the evening. I had been hunting for several days with four young braves. One morning, as we separated, I told them not to light a fire at our camp that evening, for I had just seen a wounded deer go by. But when I joined them at nightfall, they had started a fire to cook supper. 'My brothers have done wrong,' said I, 'for I have seen signs of the Iroquois. I climbed a tree and thought I saw a puff of smoke rising beyond the nearby hillside to the south.' We ate our supper and I cautioned them. 'Keep watch, my brothers. Yellow-Wolf senses the enemy's presence and is going on the warpath. If he yells, let my brothers be ready to flee or to fight.'

"It was very dark. Fearing an ambush I took a great many precautions, sometimes walking on all fours or slithering along on my stomach like a snake and frequently putting my ear to the ground. I heard nothing and kept moving forward. As I rounded a small rock five men jumped on me, but I let out a terrible yell before they could gag me.

Although I was their prisoner, my heart rejoiced at having warned my brothers. They made the most of it, too. A dozen Iroquois ran in their direction and we heard four gunshots. The Malecites had wounded two and killed a third before getting away. My captors returned bearing the body of the Iroquois dog.

"Although I was a prisoner, my heart was glad because my young braves were safe. The Iroquois led me off to their camp and tied me to a tree. Karakoua said to me, 'Let Yellow-Wolf call upon his Malecite brothers, who run away like cowards, to rescue him. Before the sun has set three times he will be burned.'

" 'When Yellow-Wolf is tied to the stake he will sing his death-song like a warrior,' I retorted. 'He will not shed tears as did the father of Karakoua when Yellow-Wolf, after tearing the skin from his skull, threw red-hot cinders on his head. Let Karakoua go to the wigwam of Yellow-Wolf and there he will find his father's scalp in the bed of Yellow-Wolf's dog.'

"After five days' walk we came to their village on the edge of a river. Next day they bound me to the stake and I sang my death-song like a warrior.

My torturers began by tearing off three of my toenails and sticking thorns and burning brands into my toes. That explains why I limp a little with my left foot. They branded my thighs with red-hot irons. 'My eyes look everywhere for men, but I see only *matchiotes*,'[D] said I. *Hoa!* This last insult cost me dear, for that dog Karakoua drank one of my eyes."[3]

"Drank one of your eyes?" said I. "How does an Indian manage that, my brother?"

The old man snorted. "You are not very bright. Karakoua said to me, 'Your eye looks good, Malecite!' Then he gouged it out with his knife and swallowed it. 'Karakoua does well to drink the eyes of Yellow-Wolf,' I told him, 'since he is too cowardly to meet the gaze of a Malecite warrior, even when tied to a stake.' "

I froze with horror at this account. "My brother," said I, "it seems to me that it was more than time to make the echo speak while there was still something left of you."

A little smile appeared on the old man's lips. "You are right, my brother. I thought so too, for if Karakoua had drunk my other eye, I could not have escaped. I made a voice come out of the sky,

crying 'Untie the prisoner. He has the smallpox. If he dies in your village none of you will survive, from the old man who cannot leave his wigwam to the new-born *baboujine!*'

"The whole village fled in panic.[4] I believe I would still be tied to the stake if they had not sent back an old slave to cut my bonds, beating her soundly by way of encouragement. Once freed, I had no trouble finding weapons in the deserted village. I crossed the river in one of their birchbark canoes and camped on the opposite shore to taunt them. After two weeks I was well enough to return to my village, where my Malecite brothers received me with great joy, for they had never expected to see me again.

"A hundred winters have passed over the head of Yellow-Wolf," concluded the old man. "Now he lives alone in the midst of his tribe, for his brothers enter their wigwams at the sight of him, like little animals of the forest who hide beneath the ground when they hear the owl's mournful hooting. Micmacs and Malecites forget that when the enemy digs up the hatchet, Yellow-Wolf will strike the stake with his tomahawk and their fathers will hasten to answer the voice of the grandson of Areskoueh, who

led them to victory!" And the centenarian's head fell on his breast.

"Listen, my brother," said I. "If I have understood your words aright, you do not worship the same God as your brother Micmacs and Malecites. They are Christians, but you worship heathen gods and that is why they shun you."

"When the eagle falls upon the marten that is about to devour the timid and defenceless hare, the hare — when he is safe in his burrow — will shout to the eagle, 'Go away! I owe you nothing. You worship the sun, and I the earth that feeds me!' " The old Indian paused for a moment, then added, "When Yellow-Wolf's hooded coat is old and worn, he throws it away and puts on another. But he cannot say to his beliefs, 'You are old and worn. I shall now toss you to the back of my wigwam for my dog to sleep on.'

"Good night, young man. Remember my words well."

"Woman of the Foxes"

TRANSLATOR'S ADVICE TO THE READER

De Gaspé's gift for setting a scene and bringing characters to life is epitomized in this little-known piece. Ostensibly about an Indian slave, "Woman of the Foxes" is in fact a delightful example of de Gaspé's discursive, rambling style, with the *raconteur* speaking directly to us and digressing as the fancy takes him. There is a mingling of fiction and fact in this tale that spans French and English régimes, with sprinklings of humour, whimsy, and pathos that reflect styles and themes of such favourite authors as Dickens and Scott.

Apart from his interest in things of yesteryear, de Gaspé may have been moved to write of a slave because the topic was very much in the air in the years leading up to the American Civil War, when he appears to have written most of his material. Institutionalized slavery had only been abolished in

Britain and its colonies in 1833. The acquisition of slaves in Canada had become relatively rare even before 1800, but the presence of Indian and black slaves and servants was fairly common in the late French and early British régimes. In *Les Anciens Canadiens* and in his memoirs, de Gaspé writes of his parents' perfect cook, the exuberant mulatto Lisette, who "was only a little afraid of her master" and obeyed her mistress's orders pretty well as she pleased. Slaves tended to be house servants, with the French reportedly preferring the tractable *panis* (from "Pawnee"), whereas the British were more likely to have slaves of African origin.

Whatever de Gaspé's initial intention may have been, the most significant literary element in the tale revolves around the ceremonious interchange between Seigneur Couillard and the old Abenaki, Katoueh. The scholarly seigneur exemplifies an eighteenth-century ideal, and one should note the humanistic little homily to his boatmen on the true meaning of the word aboriginal. Katoueh, while dispensing dignified hospitality to his brother Frenchman, strikes a wily bargain on his son's behalf. The Christian gentleman saves a soul, and all are satisfied.

Remember, little child, heaven sometimes
Revenges th'oppressed upon the heads of kings.
Beautiful Virgin, surely a goddess's offspring,
Fear lest the stranger perish in distress:
For the nameless beggar is the envoy of the gods.

André Chénier[A]

WOMAN OF THE FOXES[1]

Before recounting the story of this slave[B] whom I knew from my earliest childhood until her death, I feel I must preface it with the following two certificates. I owe these to the kindness of the Abbé Tanguay.[C]

EXTRACT from the Register of Baptisms, Marriages and Burials of the Parish of Saint-Thomas[D] for the year seventeen hundred and sixty-one. The ninth of May, in the year seventeen hundred and sixty-one, I, the undersigned, parish priest of Saint-Thomas, baptized with the usual ceremonies an Indian woman aged about twenty-six, belonging to Madame Couillard. The woman was named

Geneviève. The godfather was Monsieur André Couillard, ecclesiastic, the godmother Madame Couillard, mistress of the said Indian woman, who signed with the godfather and myself.

(Signed)

[Marie-Geneviève] Alliés Widow COUILLARD

A. THOMAS COUILLARD, ecclesiastic

MAISONBASSE, priest

On the twelfth of October, eighteen hundred and eight, I, priest of this parish, did bury in the cemetery of this parish the body of Marie Geneviève, an Indian woman, a native of the land of the Foxes brought up from her youth in the house of Monsieur Couillard, *seigneur primitif*, where she was baptized, received a Christian and Catholic upbringing and her First Communion, and thereafter lived as a good Christian. She died at about seventy-five years of age, and was unable to receive the Last Sacraments and Extreme Unction because of the suddenness of her death, although she had received the Sacrament of Penance a few days previously. Present at the said burial were Monsieur Antoine Gaspard Couillard, under-

signed, Pierre Fournier, C. Etienne Churet and several other witnesses who were unable to sign.

(Signed)

ANTOINE GASPARD COUILLARD

J. M. VERREAU, priest

Although this Indian woman was not baptized until her twenties, she was only about eleven or twelve when Monsieur Jean-Baptiste Couillard purchased her from an Abenaki Indian. I can only suppose that the curé of Saint-Thomas thought it his duty to instruct the neophyte before giving her the sacraments of baptism and penance, and that the young girl's slow intellect was the cause of this delay. La Grosse (I never knew her by any other name) had in fact a very limited intelligence, although she was by no means an imbecile. She spoke haltingly, using a patois of her own invention.

About the year 1746, Captain Jean-Baptiste Couillard de l'Épinay, seigneur of Saint-Thomas and Saint-Pierre,[2, E] left Quebec in the afternoon of a fine August day. As luck would have it, he was

forced to camp for the night in the parish of Saint-Valier at the southwest end of Bellechasse Bay.[3] At first he felt rather put out at being prevented by wind and tide from reaching his home in Saint-Thomas that same evening. However, it being an ill wind that blows no good, he could only be thankful in retrospect. The small boat[F] in which he had taken passage was level with the parish church of Saint-Valier when, upon a sudden drop in the south wind, Captain Couillard gave the following order:

"Lower the sails, grab the oars, and heave-ho m'hearties!"

The two young boatmen obeyed. But sculling against wind and tide is an arduous task, and Joncas, one of the oarsmen, did not relish the prospect of rowing five leagues before reaching the manor house of Saint-Thomas. As they drew abreast of the charming stand of maples that crowns the headland west of Bellechasse Bay, he remarked to Captain Couillard, who held the rudder in one hand and a volume of Horace in the other, "Captain, you're such a scholar: can you tell us who invented sails?"

Monsieur Couillard,[4] pleased to be consulted on

so important a point of history, pocketed his book and drew out his snuff box to clear his brain. After blowing his nose and coughing, as must any learned man when consulted upon a weighty question, he said, "Noah's Ark had no sails, of that we can be sure, *primo* because, not being bound for any port, Noah cared little for the course his vessel took. *Secundo* . . ."

"As for *secundo*," said Joncas, "I think, Captain — begging your pardon — that I can give you the reason. Captain Noah and his crew couldn't see to steer because they were shut up in the ship's hold."

"Well, that settles the second point!" laughed Monsieur Couillard. "You're a bright fellow, Joncas, and with a little study you'd be a scholar. I know what I'm talking about, mark my words." The learned captain flicked the Spanish tobacco from his lace shirtfrill. "Did the ancients, who wore no shirts, use sails on their vessels? I must look into it some time," he muttered, then continued his lecture.

"Nevertheless, the divine Homer, who — as you know, my children — lived two thousand years before the Christian era, speaks of the Greek fleet that carried Agamemnon's countless battalions.

These vessels must have had sails, because Agamemnon wished to sacrifice his daughter Iphegenia to obtain a favourable wind from the gods. The Argonauts, twelve hundred years before Christ — the Argonauts, named for the good ship *Argo* . . ."

"Excuse me for interrupting, Captain, but I believe the good Lord invented sails," asserted Joncas.

"Right you are, my son," replied Monsieur Couillard. "God gave man intelligence and the genius for invention, just as he gave animals their admirable instinct." And forthwith the scholar launched into a long-winded dissertation on things physiological, theological, and metaphysical.

Joncas, taking advantage of a momentary pause while the scholar produced his snuff box for another pinch of tobacco, said hurriedly, "Since we agree the good Lord invented sails, would you be kind enough to tell me who invented oars?"

"Oars, my son, are as old as the art of navigating in tiny boats or even on a piece of floating wood. Homer tells us in his *Odyssey* — with which you're no doubt familiar — that the wise Ulysses used plenty of oars to escape the huge chunks of stone

hurled at his fleet by the Cyclops. I could quote numerous authors who talk of biremes, triremes, and so on. But Homer and Virgil being poets, they generally give Jason credit for inventing navigation, although it seems to me the credit, as with the invention of writing, belongs to the Phoenicians, already a powerful and flourishing nation when the Argonauts set sail from Greece to Colchis in the vessel *Argo* to capture the Golden Fleece. And even before Dido — *Sidonia Dido*, as Virgil calls her, you know — landed in Africa to found Carthage, the Phoenicians already possessed several long-established colonies on that continent — or so said Strabo and Diodorus of Sicily, whose views are not to be taken lightly. Personally, I think the origins of this art are lost in the mists of time."

"Just now, Captain," spoke up Lebrun, the second sailor, "you talked of Cyclops throwing huge chunks of stone. Those fellows must have had pretty remarkable wrists!"

"The Cyclops, my son, were giants with only one eye in the middle of their forehead."

"Well in that case I'm not surprised their aim was so bad," remarked Joncas, "even though the target was an entire fleet! Men with two eyes, like

An Abenaki man and woman of the mid eighteenth century. The Eastern Abenakis were a small but fierce people. "The terror they inspired among the English colonies and the Iroquois is a most amazing thing," wrote Father Joseph-Anselme Maurault in his *Histoire des Abenakis* (1866). Eastern Abenakis, Micmacs and Malecites were originally based along the rivers and coastal regions of what is now Maine and the Maritime Provinces. They wore distinctive conical headwear and hooded cloaks, often beautifully embroidered and sewn with shells. The Abenaki, sworn enemies of the English, eventually retreated to the Jesuit missions on the Saint-François, Bécancour, and Mississquoi rivers in New France. From a rare set of watercolours found in the collection of the Abbé Louis-Stanislas Malo (1801–1884). C51 42500, Collection Philéas Gagnon, Bibliothèque de la Ville de Montréal. Photo: Robert Rohonczy.

us Christians, wouldn't have missed."

"How right you are, my boy," replied the scholar. "There's another question to resolve. Is it better to take aim with one eye or two? Well, I'll deal with that once I've shown you that the invention of oars . . ."

"Never mind, Captain," interrupted Joncas. "There's no point proving the age of these delightful instruments of torture. Since the Devil invented them to drive Christians mad, he must have been in a hurry to let them in on this invaluable discovery!" Monsieur Couillard burst out laughing at the sailor's artful dig, and promptly set course for Berthier Bay.

Berthier or Bellechasse Bay, as it is indiscriminately called, lies in the parish of Saint-Valier at its southwest end, and in the parish of Berthier at its northeast and southerly extremities. At high tide it becomes a stretch of water four miles round. The southwest end, where travellers land, runs for about thirty arpents in a straight line from a bluff, crowned by a magnificent maple grove at the entrance to the bay, to the little Bellechasse River emptying into the southernmost part of this splendid shoreline.

The tide was in, and the twilight solitude was broken only by the gentle lap of water on the sandy shore, the twittering of the horned larks and sandpipers that literally covered the beach, and the last songs of birds in the lofty stand of trees above. Three wigwams[5] stood on the highest part of the river bank. A few Indian children played beneath the leafy maple boughs while an old Indian, the image of the Roman god Terminus, sat silently smoking at the door of his modest dwelling, apparently oblivious of the strangers and their approaching craft. This typically picturesque Canadian scene was lit by the last rays of the sun as it sank behind the Laurentian mountains on the far side of the river.[6]

"It's my old friend Katoueh!" exclaimed Monsieur Couillard. "He's recognized me, but he's afraid to lower his dignity as a chieftain." (The Abenakis never made the first move.)

Monsieur Couillard leapt onto the shore and went up to the chieftain. "Your brother Paleface has come to ask for shelter this night in his brother Redskin's dwelling," said he.

"My brother Paleface is welcome," replied the old chief, offering him his hand. "He is now master

in the wigwam of his brother Katoueh, and everything here is his."

After a brief exchange, Monsieur Couillard noticed that while his friend Katoueh had a generous heart, his larder offered the prospect of a most meagre supper. The Indians are frugal with gunpowder and often starve themselves rather than use it up. Thinking this the case, the captain asked Lebrun to take a gun and kill some small game.

"Stop, my brother!" called the Indian. "When Katoueh asks his friend Couillard for shelter in his great wigwam, Couillard says to him, 'Be seated, my brother, and eat.' Does Katoueh bring supper to his friend the Paleface?" And so saying, he took a gun and left his guests.

"This aboriginal's hospitality is touching," said Monsieur Couillard.

"I don't want to be a nuisance, Captain, but what kind of animal is an aboriginal?" asked Joncas.

"My son," replied the scholar, "it's very true that Man is an animal that prides himself on being intelligent, although that biting critic Boileau assures us that Man is the stupidest beast in creation. Leave that aside for the moment, however, and I'll get back to it later. Actually, you can use

the word 'animal' in speaking of Man, but always with a qualifying adjective of some kind — something you seem to have overlooked, no doubt through sheer absentmindedness. But to answer your question — you've read in Roman history about a people in Italy who were called aboriginals. You also know that the French word *aborigène* is a derivative of the Latin *aborigenes*, meaning native in origin or first inhabitants. My friend Katoueh belongs to this race of men and is therefore an aboriginal or native of Canada.

"But to get back to my point, this Indian's hospitality is indeed touching. Here he is, surrounded by game, and yet he'd probably go without food rather than use up his ammunition, since his powder horn — that's the common name, although powder *flash* is of course the correct expression — looks nearly empty to me.

"My children, I've been entertained by the rich, even in the châteaux of France and elsewhere, but I've always thought that only the poor man is truly hospitable. Seven times out of ten, the rich man is probably indebted to his guest for relieving his boredom, brightening his solitude, and giving him a chance to show off his grand possessions and his

wealth. On the other hand, the poor man or one of modest means does without when exercising this noble virtue — which reminds me of a little legend that my sainted mother, now in heaven, used to tell."

A POOR COTTAGE

There was once a family of poor peasants consisting of father, mother, and six young children. They lived in a little thatched cottage on the edge of a Normandy forest. Let us enter this miserable hut. It was eight o'clock in the evening on a dark November night. The wind had been wuthering and the rain falling in torrents for a week, as though the waterfalls of heaven had opened and were threatening Earth with a second Flood. The parents and two of the children, aged ten and twelve, watched by the hearth where a dwindling fagot burned, despite wind and water swirling down the chimney. Occasional puffs of smoke left the watchers in total darkness. The four youngest children lay sleeping on piles of filthy rags and straw.

Antoine-Gaspard Couillard de l'Épinay (1787–1847), de Gaspé's childhood friend, was the son of the seigneur of Rivière-du-Sud whom the author used as a model for the "Captain Couillard" of "Woman of the Foxes." The Saint-Jean Port-Joli seigneurie was a short ride from the Rivière-du-Sud (Saint-Thomas de Montmagny) fief. Couillards and de Gaspé had been friends for generations. Antoine-Gaspard became a physician and legislative councillor, but fell on hard times after investing too heavily in the restoration of the family manor. Pastel attributed to Dulongpré, A.67.102.D. Musée du Québec.

"What misery and heartache poor people have to bear before they die," said the woodcutter sadly. "It makes me lose heart!"

"You've never talked like this before, my man," said the woman. "Have you lost all faith in God and Our Lady — and you such a good Christian?"

"No indeed," replied the husband. "Without that faith to sustain me, without my love for my family, I'd have died of heartbreak long ago. I've never complained about my suffering before God or man. It's *your* misery, dear wife and children, that tears at my heart. This evening there was only a quarter of a loaf of bread left in the hutch, and the four youngest wept with hunger. We gave each of them a small piece, and now they're asleep. But you — you're going without food to dry the tears of poor innocents too young to understand our poverty. It's enough to make a man tear his hair in despair!"

There was a moment of silence within the hut, made more solemn by the raging elements outside and the sobs of mother and children. Then the woodcutter spoke.

"You're right, my dear wife, I've failed in my duty. This is the hour of prayer. Let us pray to the good Lord with fervour and trust, and beg his

forgiveness for me in this moment of weakness."

This act of Christian piety was barely done when a knock on the door startled the family. "Come in," said the peasant. The door of the hut opened to admit an aged woman bent double, walking with the help of a long cane. The family hurried to help her off with a dripping old cape that barely covered her shoulders, then sat her down beside the hearth and threw another fagot on the fire.

"I'm hungry," said the beggar-woman, once she had warmed herself. "Give me some supper, for the love of God."

"We're very poor, my good mother," replied the peasant. "We've nothing but bread, but I offer you that with all my heart." And so saying, he gave her the little bit of bread that remained in the hutch. While the old woman devoured this meagre fare, the children gazed at her tearfully.

"I've had nothing to eat for two days," said the old woman, once she had downed the last mouthful. "Another bit of bread for the love of Our Lady!"

"We have no more," said the woodcutter. "But wait, good mother — I'll run over to my neighbour's house not half a league from here. He's rich and has plenty of everything. He knows I'm honest

and hardworking, and he won't refuse me a loaf of bread."

"He'll be poorer than you tomorrow," said the old woman with assurance. "I've just come from his house, and not only did he refuse me the shelter of his roof this terrible night: he even denied me the paltry scrap of bread one gives the poor. But hark!"

The raging wind fell silent as if at the behest of some powerful genie, and a bright fire blazed up on the hearth. The beating of wings was heard, as though a huge bird with a twenty-foot wingspan had passed over the forest.

"It's the ministering angel of God's justice," said the old woman solemnly, "going his nocturnal round in the kingdom of Saint Louis, the friend and father of the poor on earth and in heaven!"

The family was seized with terror at this pronouncement, and all fell face down on the earthen floor. The old woman rose from her seat, opened the door of the hut, and stretched her hand toward the dwelling of the pitiless rich man. "Behold the justice of the Lord passeth over!" she cried. An immense bolt of lightning lit up the sky and a dreadful clap of thunder shook the forest as torrents

of flame heralded the merciless nabob's ruin.

"Have pity! Have pity on him!" cried the woodcutter and his wife.

"The justice of the Almighty is inflexible," replied the old woman with authority. "This man has always refused the poor the shelter of his roof and the crumbs from his table. The hand of God has struck justly!" The beldam said nothing for a moment, then added, "The hutch from which you took the last bit of bread for the poor beggar-woman will fill up as fast as you empty it, and when you are rich, you will build a shelter for suffering humanity in place of this hovel." And with these words she disappeared.

The arrival of Katoueh with a bag full of small game put an end to a long and scholarly discourse in which the erudite Monsieur Couillard cited numerous hospitable traits among the Hebrews, Greeks, and Romans, not forgetting the generosity of King Evander to pious Aeneas.

Supper over, Monsieur Couillard seated himself on the sand in front of his host's wigwam and smoked a pipe as he talked of war and hunting with the old Indian. A piercing shriek made him look

up to see a young Indian girl of eleven or twelve being pursued by other children, one of whom carried a burning brand. The unfortunate child ran to the captain for safety, and he saw that her eye was a welter of blood.

Monsieur Couillard chased off the black imps. The old chief said not a word, but kept on smoking as though he had seen nothing.

"Why do you let your children play such cruel games?" asked Monsieur Couillard.

"It's a slave!" retorted the Indian, shrugging and pointing scornfully at the child.

"Merciful God, a slave!" cried Monsieur Couillard, "doomed to eat the others' scraps when they've had their fill, fighting over the leavings with her masters' dogs — and she barely twelve years old! Doomed to sleep when her tormentors are tired of torturing her, to wear their discarded rags in the cold! To be denied the warmth of her masters' wigwam unless the other children don't care for the cruel pleasure of seeing her grovel in the snow, paralysed with cold. A child barely twelve years old! She looks as though she had a strong constitution and is in for a long and painful martyrdom."

And as he soliloquized, the excellent man tore a

Although relatively modern, this sensitive ink sketch of the Rue Couillard in Quebec City gives an accurate idea of the huddled intimacy of the old Quebec streets. It was here, wrote de Gaspé, "in the street that bears his name," that "the excellent Monsieur Couillard died in my arms" in 1808. "Rue Couillard à Québec," ink on paper drawing by Simone Hudon. 84.42.26. Musée du Québec. Photo: Patrick Altman.

handkerchief and dipped it in cold water to make a compress, applying it to the half-gouged eye of the unhappy slave.

"My brother Katoueh is a great hunter. He treks long distances through the forest in pursuit of moose and caribou, and this child is too young and weak to follow him."

"If the slave cannot reach the wigwam by nightfall," replied the Indian, "she will stay in the forest to be eaten by wolves, just as her dogs of brothers, the Iroquois, ate the hearts of their Abenaki prisoners."

Monsieur Couillard was too well versed in the Indians' vengeful nature to suggest buying the girl after hearing these cruel words. Instead he said to the old chief, "Couillard has always been the Redskins' friend. He has shared the hardships of the hunt and the dangers of war with them. A hundred times the forest has trembled beneath the feet of French and Abenaki warriors marching together against the English and their allies, the Foxes. The hatchet of Katoueh and the sword of Couillard are still red with the blood of their foes![G] Warriors are brothers and give presents to each other."

"My brother has spoken well and truly," said the old chief.

"Your brother needs a young girl to amuse and take care of his son, who is but three years old. My brother Katoueh will please his friend greatly by giving him this slave."

"If the Iroquois girl belonged to Katoueh, he would say to his Paleface friend, 'The slave is yours, as is everything in his wigwam,' " asserted the old chief. He waved a hand toward the second wigwam. "But she is the slave of his son, the Panther, who spared the young squaw to serve his wife and amuse his children."

"Good God!" exclaimed Monsieur Couillard. "His son spared her for his children's amusement! Why didn't he burn her alive to satisfy his vengeance, as he probably did with the rest of her family! Why didn't he inflict the same terrible torments! She would now sleep where all the tortures of her butchers could not trouble her! The Panther spared her to amuse his children! Thus the tiger drags live prey into his den so that his young can learn to tear the palpitating flesh from his victims!" Then he ventured, "Does my brother Katoueh think the Panther will agree to sell his slave?"

"The son of Katoueh loves silver, but he loves vengeance more," said the old man. "Before he killed the young squaw's mother at the stake, he told her, 'I will spare your daughter, but she will be more unhappy than the dogs in my wigwam.' And the mother cried, 'Kill her! Kill her!' "

Monsieur Couillard heaved a sigh that seemed almost a moan. "Couillard has promised his wife a slave to care for her *baboujine*," he said. "He loves his good wife and would like to please her. Katoueh is a father who knows the right words to touch his son's heart. Let him speak to his son if he loves his friend the Paleface, and Couillard will thank him."

The Indian smoked silently for several minutes, then answered, "Let my brother look to the mountains of the north, and he will see one that towers above all others. The Panther is more proud and vain than this high mountain. Palefaces have the supple tongue of that serpent Black-Robe has told us about, who with fine words flattered the vanity of the first woman, our grandmother, and made her eat the apple that doomed all her children. Let my brother vaunt the exploits of the young warrior, and as a reward for such bravery let him give the warrior his fine hunting gun and powder horn with

their silver mountings. The Panther, shamed at having nothing to offer in return, will be proud and happy to give him the slave."

We shall see with what success Monsieur Couillard followed the counsels of old Katoueh.

The captain's gun was a valuable arm that came from his late father, and like every brave hunter he was greatly attached to it. He felt the sacrifice keenly, and would have preferred to pay twice its worth in gold. But this was an act of charity. Without a moment's hesitation, he picked up the gun and walked over to the wigwam of the young Indian, who sat stolidly smoking his pipe, seemingly oblivious to the captain's approach.

"Your brother Paleface didn't wish to leave Bellechasse Bay without smoking a pipe with the son of his old friend Katoueh," remarked Captain Couillard.

"My brother Frenchman is welcome," the young man responded, removing the *calumet* from his mouth and waving it gracefully at a seat on the fallen log where he was sitting.

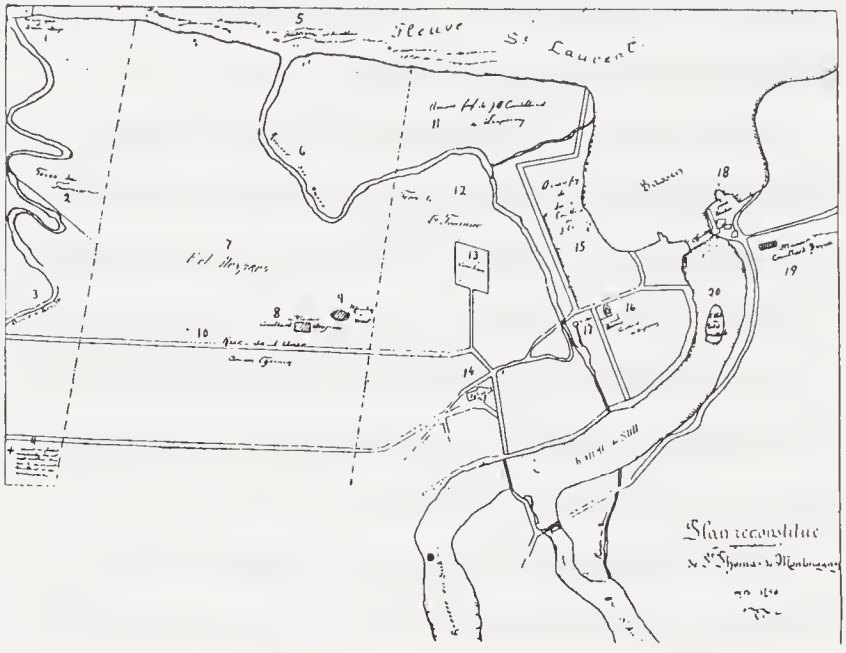
"Great Onontio[H] loves his Redskin allies," announced Captain Couillard. "He has told his French officers, 'When you meet one of their great warriors,

thank him on behalf of their father Onontio.' The Panther is a great warrior, and his brother Paleface thanks him in the name of great Onontio for the services rendered to his brothers the French."

"The Panther is still very young," replied the Indian. "Only six English and Iroquois scalps hang from his belt, and he has burned but three of his enemies at the stake. As yet his hatchet is stained by just a few drops of blood, for his enemies flee before him as the deer when the forest panther roars."

"The Panther is a great warrior!" exclaimed Monsieur Couillard. "He deserves to carry fine weapons, for he is the terror of his enemies and those of the French!" And so saying, he presented him with his silver-mounted gun and powder horn.

"The Paleface has a generous heart!" cried the young Indian, unable to suppress the sudden blush that suffused his face, despite his habitual stoicism. He handled the weapons admiringly, squinting down the barrel of the gun, then added dejectedly, "The Frenchman's friend has nothing to offer in return today, but the Panther is a great hunter and will very soon give him a hooded beaver coat that the Great Onontio himself would be proud to wear.[7]



This early unidentified map was reproduced in the valuable *Histoire des seigneurs de la Rivière-du-Sud* (1912) by Abbé Azarie Couillard Després. The Couillard de l'Épinay manor house is shown to the left of the Rivière du Sud (no. 16). The earlier manor house described in de Gaspé's piece would have been closer to the Saint Lawrence shore. Before bridges were built, inhabitants apparently had to ford the Rivière-du-Sud and the Bras Saint-Nicholas (probably at lower right, where small bridges are shown on this map) when skirting the bay on horseback.

"The Panther's heart is as great as it is brave," responded Captain Couillard, "and his brother Paleface thanks him for his rich gift. But let my brother heed the words of his friend. Couillard has a small boy of three who is so naughty that he hits, bites, and scratches the women who look after him, and it is only by paying them much silver that your brother persuades them to stay with his son. The Panther has a young slave. Let him give her to his friend the Frenchman to amuse and serve his *baboujine*, and the Frenchman will thank him and accept nothing more."

"My brother Paleface has said in his pride, 'Couillard is rich, with great wigwams, land, and herds. The Panther is poor and needs his pelts, so I shall accept only his slave — a thing he values less than his dog,' " retorted the Indian. "The Panther will keep his slave."

"The Panther has boasted of his great heart," countered Monsieur Couillard, "yet he refuses his friend a worthless slave and promises him skins of beaver that swim in the lakes and rivers of the forest!" And with this he made as if to leave.

The young Indian's eyes flashed as bright as a steel blade. His instinctive reaction was to hand

back the gun and powder horn, but the pride of being able to adorn himself with them was too strong. "When the Panther refused to give his friend the slave, he thought the Paleface too scornful of the Redskin to accept a valuable gift. But since my brother wishes to have the young squaw, let her follow him. The Frenchman will see that the Panther has a generous heart and is a great hunter who knows the haunts of the beaver, hidden beneath the earth like field mice." The Indian drew himself up haughtily. "Couillard will find the word of a poor Abenaki well worth that of a rich Frenchman."

The excellent Monsieur Couillard waited impatiently for the outgoing tide so that he could carry the unfortunate child home, there to receive the care her pitiable condition and mutilated eye demanded. The young Indian girl soon won her masters' confidence. Obliging, gentle, and affectionate, she developed a tender and maternal devotion for the lovable child who was hers to amuse. She called him her "son" as soon as she learned to prattle in French. The depth of her love may be gauged from the fact that fifty years later, on learning that her son (as she still called him) was

gravely ill at Quebec, she died of a broken heart — but of that, more later.

Monsieur and Madame Couillard, seeing how the young Indian girl loved their son and made up little games to amuse him, gave him into her care as to a trusted maidservant. One day, however, the strength of their confidence was severely tried. In those days the seigneurial manor house stood on the crest of a bluff overlooking the bay — a splendid stretch of water that, at high tide, lapped the foot of the cliff beneath the very windows of the house.

Madame Couillard entered her drawing room one day to see a spectacle that filled her with terror. There, swimming across the bay, was the young Indian girl with the child on her shoulders. The mother gave an agonized shriek that brought her husband running.[1] When he saw what had frightened her, he begged his wife to remain silent lest she expose the child to the gravest danger.

For a while the young girl played like a dolphin in the warm waters of the Saint Lawrence, then landed the youngster on the far shore of the bay, where she amused him with stones and shells at the water's edge. Monsieur Couillard did his best to

water's edge. Monsieur Couillard did his best to calm his wife, telling her that their son ran no risk with such an expert swimmer. On the contrary, the real danger lay in frightening the girl, as she was very timid. Finding it impossible to calm his wife, he offered to go to the far shore of the bay, on the express condition that if the young Indian swam back with the child during his absence, his wife must not cry out for fear of startling the girl. He leapt on his horse and set off, but the way was long and he was forced to ford the Rivière-du-Sud some ten arpents off, and cross a second stream call Le Bras, after which he had to cover a further twenty arpents before reaching the beach where his son was playing. In the event, the Indian girl had brought the child back safe and sound before he had gone barely half way. Madame Couillard finally realized that her son ran no risk, for she used to tell how the child, who had been of a naturally delicate constitution, owed his health to the cold baths La Grosse gave him in the Saint Lawrence.

Poor Grosse! She would frequently tell us in her patois, as she looked across the fine reach of the Saint-Thomas bay at high tide, "Cross bay many times with my son on back, *va!* But not now. Me

six-foot Seigneur Couillard, now a man in his prime.

In early October of 1808 I was at Saint-Thomas en route for Quebec. It was about two in the afternoon, and we were drinking coffee after our meal when La Grosse came into the room shouting, "A letter from my son! A letter from my son!" It was indeed a letter from Monsieur Couillard, on his way home after a three-week trip to Montreal. He wrote his wife from Quebec to say that a slight indisposition prevented him from coming to the seigneury for several days, and asked her to join him in the city.

Madame Couillard[J] was not particularly worried. "Your glutton of a father has probably dined too well with the priests and other friends in the District of Montreal, old classmates who trotted him around like a fatted calf," she said to her son.[K] "Without me to keep an eye on what he eats, the way I do here, he's probably gorged himself on his beloved pears and grapes, despite all his promises before leaving." She seemed perfectly unconcerned, but when La Grosse cried out, "My son is going to die! My son is going to die!" Madame Couillard burst into tears.

My friend, young Couillard, hurried to his

mother's side. "It's all La Grosse's fault. She's frightened you."

The reproach silenced the poor Indian woman, who leaned her head on her right shoulder and sobbed at length, tears streaming from her dull, half-closed eye. The good woman's forebodings had not been wrong. She died of anxiety and a broken heart at Saint-Thomas, repeating incessantly, "My son is going to die!" About three days later, the excellent Monsieur Couillard expired in my arms in Quebec City, in the street that bears his name.[L] He was very fond of the gentle Indian, and we had been careful not to tell him of her death.

Thus ended two very different lives — master and slave, one the *parfait gentilhomme*, remarkably handsome and learned, the other a poor Indian woman of limited intelligence, ugly, disfigured, and yet each resembling the other in the most precious qualities of heart and soul. They left this earth to meet in heaven, there to receive in equal measure the rewards God grants to virtue.

"Big Louis"

TRANSLATOR'S ADVICE TO THE READER

With consummate but seemingly casual artistry, de Gaspé gives us a series of complex messages in the telling of the Legend of Indian Lorette.

His avowed aim is to record an item of oral history of the remnant of the Huron confederacy that settled at the Jesuit mission of Jeune Lorette, a few miles inland from Quebec City, after the Huron diaspora. This is a legend told with wit, charm and irony. De Gaspé the author projects himself as the easy-going narrator, seeker of tales of old, in a chance encounter with a pensive Huron. Big Louis epitomizes the dilemma of his tribe — the sense of the Hurons' past greatness contrasted with their present plight. He encapsulates the confrontation of two cultures, with brandy and Christianity as symbolic catalysts.

At another level, de Gaspé portrays the thought-

less teasing of even such a sensitive observer as his narrator/self. He lets us hear the colloquial familiarity of the white man's talk compared to the formal phrases of Big Louis. As the two match wits, very human characters emerge from behind the masks of Canadian *gentilhomme* and Noble Savage.

Deepest of all is the author's kindred feeling for a fallen nation in a society where time is sweeping forward as he writes, where railways and industry and progress, the watchwords of the nineteenth century, are relegating both the narrator, last seigneur of Saint-Jean Port-Joli, and his subject, the brave of a fading tribe, to historical footnotes.

The pride of being a full-blooded Indian lay close to the hearts of the dwindling tribesmen, as this story shows. Zacharie Vincent, the Huron artist of Jeune Lorette whose self-portrait is on the cover of this book, styled himself as the last of the full-blooded Hurons.

BIG LOUIS AND THE LEGEND OF INDIAN LORETTE[1]

Some forty years ago, everyone in Quebec knew Ohiarekwen,[2] a Huron Indian nicknamed Big Louis. He was a tall man who always walked with shoulders held high, his superb bearing that of a Roman emperor. This born philosopher had never studied at any of our schools, but was nevertheless a formidable logician. He knew that his tribe, now virtually wiped out, had once been a great and powerful nation which had ruled immense stretches of forest, lake, and river. Furthermore, he was aware that the Palefaces had seized these vast possessions, cheating the Indians of even a fief called Saint-Gabriel,[A] as the Hurons had lost the title deeds. And since the Indian knew nothing of the white man's sense of fair play when stripping the weak of their possessions, he naturally enough

A Huron man and woman of the mid eighteenth century. The Hurons had established a farming and trading economy that widened into an empire once they became middlemen between the furtrapping northern Algonkians and the beaver-hungry French. Huronia fell before the onslaught of the white man's diseases and the determined Iroquois foe. By the end of the seventeenth century, a small remnant of Huron Christians had found refuge at the Jesuit mission of Jeune or Indian Lorette, north of Quebec City. From a rare set of watercolours found in the collection of the Abbé Louis-Stanislas Malo (1801–1884). C51 42500, Collection Philéas Gagnon, Bibliothèque de la Ville de Montréal. Photo: Robert Rohonczy.

concluded that they merely acted according to the right of might. On the basis of this premise Big Louis thought he, too, could legally and in good conscience exact a small tribute from time to time — tribute in the form of a little brandy from the counters of the pale-faced female citizens of Quebec and its environs, their natural protectors being absent. He kept himself plentifully supplied in this way, which shows how right I am in asserting that this natural philosopher was also a logician to be reckoned with.

It was about five in the afternoon of a fine June day, around the year 1816, that I came to Saint Ambroise in search of a night's hospitality from the curé, my old friend, Monsieur Bédard, at one time a director of the Little Seminary of Quebec. I was on my way to Lake Saint Charles for a fishing and hunting expedition on the morrow. Monsieur Bédard had been away on missions among the Indians of the Gulf of Saint Lawrence, and I hadn't seen him since his return. But the worthy priest being absent and only expected late in the evening, I pushed on to the Indian village of Lorette, a little way from the presbytery of Saint-Ambroise. Dusk was falling as I walked along the pretty Saint

Charles River that runs by the village, when, a little way above the falls, I beheld the face of a man reflected in the clear waters flowing at his feet. As I drew near I recognized Ohiarekwen, back bowed, arms folded, and chin resting on his chest. Big Louis was sober and pensive.

"Good day, my brother," said I.

But the Huron kept silent, and it was only after a second or third challenge that he muttered a few words in the Indian dialect.

"Aren't you speaking French this evening?" I asked.

"And you," he retorted, giving me back my familiar *tu*, "are you speaking Huron?"

"No," said I shortly.

"Yet it is a beautiful language!" observed the Indian.

"What good would the Huron language be to me?" I countered. "There are twenty Indians at most in your village who can speak it now, and in thirty years there won't be a single one left."

"Have you come here to taunt me with the extinction of my race?" cried the Huron. "Go away!" And he resumed his ruminative stance.

"In thirty years," said I, "you'll all have good

French blood in your veins."

The Indian drew himself up proudly and exclaimed, "In thirty years the Huron blood that coursed in the veins of my ancestors, as pure as the clear waters of this cataract, will be as murky as the stagnant waters of the swamp where frogs paddle!"

I felt all the bitterness of the sarcasm I had brought upon myself, and a sudden blush suffused my face. Ohiarekwen had spoken the truth: when Indian blood ran unsullied in the veins of the Huron, the Redskins were free of the hideous vices transmitted by the Palefaces. As he so rightly said, the proud Huron, once the terror of all the natives of North America, will vanish. The pure blood that made the Hurons a race of heroes and dauntless hunters will resemble the muddy waters of the swamp.

I was on the point of retiring, thoroughly embarrassed by Big Louis' rude lesson. Still, as I was rather anxious to learn something about a pet subject of mine, I said to him, "Let there be peace between us, my brother. I'm sorry to have given you pain, and I ask your pardon. Let us think of it no more."

"But I *do* think of it," retorted the Huron. "I

am on my own ground here. Go away, and trouble my rest no further." And he fell back into his former pensive attitude.

I saw the Indian was deaf to all my arguments, but knowing of one that would surely make him more sociable, I drew from the pocket of my smock the little flask of brandy which was the companion of every hunter of the time — and probably still is, temperance cards notwithstanding.[B]

"Let's have a drink and make peace," said I.

The Huron made no answer at first. But the gurgle of the liquid as I poured it into a small tumbler and the even more persuasive smell of alcohol made him straighten up, and he swallowed nearly half a cup of brandy at one go.

"Your drink is good, Gaspé," said he, handing me back the tumbler.

Surly bear, said I to myself, I knew I could loosen your tongue.

"Now my brother," I resumed aloud, "let's have a friendly chat. Is it true the Hurons of Lorette believe their village will neither grow nor shrink because each night a huge serpent swims in this river from which you drink?"

"Who told you that tale?" replied the Huron

sharply, departing from the cold reserve usual to men of his race.

"Someone who ought to know as well as you: Vincent-Ferrier Sasennio,[3] who studied at the Quebec Seminary and was a boarder with me for several years."

"Sasennio would have done better to read his Latin books, since he wanted to be a priest, rather than jabbering of things he knew nothing about." Big Louis bowed his head again, remaining sullen and silent for a long time despite my pressing questions.

"*Va-t-en*," he said at length. "I don't like you. Five years ago I was at your home, sober and well-spoken, and I said to you, 'Gaspé, Canadian gentlemen like beaver meat during Lent, and Louis is a great hunter!'

" 'True,' you said, 'and if you bring me beaver, I will pay you generously.'

" 'There's no need of that,' I replied, 'but you see, my brother, the hunter can't live in the forest without powder and lead, and he also needs flour to make *sagamité*.[C] Lend me five *piastres* and I will repay you in beaver meat.' You laughed in my face and shouted, aping the Indian manner, '*Hoa!*

An Algonkian man and woman of the mid eighteenth century, from a rare set of watercolours found in the collection of the Abbé Louis-Stanislas Malo (1801–1884). For many years a missionary at Carleton on the Baie des Chaleurs, the abbé worked among the Micmacs of Ristigouche and collected curiosities of the region. He was curé of Bécancour from 1850 to 1884. C51 42499, Collection Philéas Gagnon, Bibliothèque de la Ville de Montréal. Photo: Robert Rohonczy.

You'll drink my money, Louis, and I certainly won't get fat on the beaver meat *you* bring me!' "[4]

The Huron was evidently very thirsty and deliberately picking a quarrel in order to drink another tumbler of my brandy. He was too clever to be unaware of my keen interest in the legend I'd mentioned, but with the natural deviousness of the Indian, he went roundabout to gain his end.

"Come now, Louis, let's forget about that beaver business and be at peace with one another. I'll give you another drink to ratify the articles of peace as follows: first, you'll tell me the story of the great serpent without leaving anything out, and second, you won't be thirsty until the story is told."

"It is well. Give now," said the Huron brusquely.

I was pretty sure Big Louis had mental reservations about our treaty, but since I held the key to the cellar I wasn't unduly concerned.

Ohiarekwen swallowed another tumbler of brandy and pursed his lips. "Your flask is empty?" he inquired.

"Wrong, *mon vieux*," I replied. "It's hardly been touched. When I'm off to the wars I always carry a healthy supply of good ammunition."

"But," said the Indian, as sharp-witted as ever

and a thought striking him, "if you give me all your brandy, you'll have none left."

"Very true, Louis. Your logic is irrefutable. But don't worry, I'll get my flask refilled by my friend, the curé of Saint-Ambroise. Now tell me the story of the great serpent."

The Huron, reassured on a subject so close to his heart, began his tale as follows.

The Legend of the Great Serpent[D]

"The Hurons were not always the handful of men you see in this village. Their warriors were as numerous as the stars of heaven on a fine night. In other times they made all the nations of North America tremble, from the Great Lakes to the Lower Saint Lawrence. If a Huron camped beside a lake or river, what foe was brave enough to trouble its waters? What enemy hunter dared come within a month's march of his village! When a great Huron chief struck the stake with his hatchet, the trees

shook as they do in great storms and their leaves covered the earth for miles around, as though a terrible hurricane had passed through the forest. See," said Ohiarekwen sadly, stretching his arm toward his village. "See what little is left us of so much greatness and glory!"[E]

The Huron's head dropped upon his breast, and for a long time I silently contemplated his reflection in the watery mirror. An artist would have taken him as a model for the statue of affliction.

"Let us leave these painful memories, my brother," said I. "I know the history of your nation, its exploits in war, its greatness and misfortunes. Pray continue with the legend of the great serpent."

"Not long after my tribe left Sillery to come and live on this land, an old Huron, a holy man named Haouroukaeh[5] was returning from the hunt. The night was dark, and the old Huron, being very tired, lay down to sleep beside this river. The French call it the Saint Charles, but the Huron name for it is Oriawenrak,[F] which means river of trout. He fell asleep about an arpent farther down from where we stand now. In the heat of summer, an Indian sleeps just as well under a tree as in a house or cabin, if not better.

"As he slept, the old man had a dream. A beautiful woman dressed in scarlet silk appeared to him, her garnet-red eyes shining like stars.

" 'Haouroukaeh!' she called, her voice as sweet as the nestlings' chirp. 'Haouroukaeh! Before the new leaves bud on the trees of this forest, you will sleep forever.'

" 'Thank you,' replied the Huron in his dream. What blood remained in the veins of old Haouroukaeh, after spilling so much in wars against his enemies and those of the French, ran only drop by drop. His body weighed heavily upon his legs, and his one desire was to rest.

" 'I love you,' said the beautiful woman. 'You are a good Christian, the example of your village, and I will open the gates of heaven for you.'

"Haouroukaeh awoke, but the beautiful woman had disappeared. The next day the old man recounted his dream to the missionary, and the priest told him that Our Lady of Lorette, patron saint of the village, had appeared to him. The old man was overjoyed and told his friends, 'I'll soon go to my heavenly rest. The Blessed Virgin has promised it.'

"After the death of Haouroukaeh several old

men, hoping for pleasant dreams, went and slept beneath the tree where he had seen Our Lady of Lorette, but the Blessed Virgin had no wish to send them visions.

"There have always been wicked people among Palefaces as among Redskins," commented Ohiarekwen, waxing philosophic, "and it will be so after our time."

"True, my brother," said I. "Such a profound remark shows your knowledge of the human heart, but it has nothing to do with the story of the great serpent."

"You will see that it has," retorted the Huron. "If the white men had not sold the Indians rum, Otsitsot[6], the thieving wolverine whom the whites called Carcajou, would not have visited the great serpent upon us. Otsitsot was a young Huron who would sell his very blanket for firewater, the old people's name for rum. He scoffed at the good Christians who slept beneath Haouroukaeh's tree. 'If I knew Our Lady of Lorette would show me a big bottle of firewater, I'd go and lie under the tree of pleasant dreams myself.'

" 'You speak evil, my brother, and evil will befall you,' the good Christians told him.

The Falls of Lorette on the Saint Charles River, a popular subject for paintings and lithographs. This version of the scene was painted in 1854 by Cornelius Krieghoff. A.49.101.P. Musée du Québec.

Otsitsot only laughed at them, and that very evening found him beneath Haouroukaeh's tree. The night was dark, and he lit a pipe while waiting for sleep. As he lay there, pondering his misfortunes, he heard a sound far to the north, as though the mountain had trembled, followed by a noise like that of a heavy body forcing its way through the forest, crushing trees and bushes in its path. When it passed through our village, the earth shook as it does when the soldiers drag a big canon through the streets of Quebec. A massive form plunged into the river a few feet from Carcajou, and all was silent.[7] For a moment he was blinded by a great flash of light on the river. Then he saw that the light streamed from the eyes of a great serpent, its head lifted some ten feet above the water. The reptile shook its long, horse-like mane, sending out showers of sparks as though from a blazing fir and making its skin of silvery scales shine like little plates of golden mail beneath a bright noon sun. The serpent opened a huge mouth bristling with teeth like bayonets. In a thunderous voice that shook both shores, it cried, 'I detest the Huron race, but I like you, Carcajou the Wolverine. I wish to be your friend and make you prosper.'

" 'Thank you for your preference, my brother,' said Otsitsot through his chattering teeth, 'but couldn't you lower your voice a little? Otherwise it will burst my eardrums and crack my skull.'

" 'I am the little manitou worshipped by the Hurons of old,' retorted the serpent. 'When I am angry, my voice shakes the mountains and churns up the waters of lakes and rivers. But I will soften it, since I like you.' And the manitou's voice became as sweet as the trill of a nightingale.

" 'Black-Robe tells us the little manitou of our fathers was the Christians' devil. Is it true?' asked Carcajou, who instead of our good Lady of Lorette found himself conversing with an alarming neighbour.

" 'I'm surprised you say that,' replied the manitou, 'as I know you laugh at Black-Robe. But listen, my son: the little manitou is as wicked as the Christian devil to his foes, and as gentle as the newborn hare to his friends. I like you, you see, so let us have a quiet talk.'

" 'You frighten me,' replied Carcajou. 'I'm only a man, and it's difficult to have a quiet talk with such a terrifying serpent.'

" 'Oh, that's nothing!' exclaimed the serpent. 'I'll

change you into a lizard, a toad, a grass snake, or a bullfrog. Take your pick.'

" 'Much obliged,' replied Carcajou, 'but I'd rather stay the way I am. Couldn't *you* take some less horrifying form?'

" 'Let my friend's wish be my command,' said the serpent. 'My son, I can take the shape of a polar bear, a wolf, a panther, or a rattlesnake that will charm your ears like the sound of the *chichicouè*[8] — or even a man, if you prefer.'

" 'The last will suit me,' declared Carcajou.

"Scarcely had the words left his mouth than the serpent disappeared and Carcajou found himself face to face with a little old man, some three feet tall, with burning, tiger-cat eyes.

" 'Now,' said the manitou, 'mark my words carefully and profit by them. You are a lazy good-for-nothing, but you will be able to sleep or stroll about all day long with a purse full of money in your coat.'

" 'Good!' exclaimed Carcajou.

" 'You are proud and vain. I will cover you with silk, fine scarlet wool, and silver arm bands like a great chief on a visit to Onontio.'

" 'Good!' replied Carcajou again.

Huron chief Zacharie Vincent of Jeune Lorette painted this portrait of himself and his son in the early nineteenth century. 47.156. Musée du Québec. Photo: Patrick Altman.

" 'You are a drunkard, and in your tobacco pouch you will always find a bottle of firewater that is never empty.'

" '*Hoa!*' cried Carcajou. 'You are a good manitou who takes care of your friends.'

At this point in his tale, my interlocutor pursed his lips and spat two or three times in the Oriawenrak, either as a mark of burning thirst, or perhaps out of scorn for the water running at our feet. However, when he saw that I studiously ignored this reminder of his dessicated state, he muttered through clenched teeth, "The little manitou was clever. He knew that once an Indian has tasted firewater, he's always thirsty. The little manitou was generous and gave Carcajou something to quench his thirst when he needed it."

Since I was bent on proving to the Huron that I was as clever and generous as the little manitou, I poured him another tumbler of brandy. Ohiarekwen wet his whistle and continued his legend.

" 'The Great Chief refuses to let you marry his daughter, whom you love, because you are poor, lazy, a drunkard, and a rake. But he'll give her to you once you're rich, otherwise I'll wring his neck.'

" 'Good!' exclaimed Otsitsot, who took a some-

what cavalier view of his future father-in-law's neck.

" 'Black-Robe wants the village chiefs to throw you out, but I'll play him so many bad tricks that he'll leave you alone. I'll send weasels to throttle his hens, and rats and mice to eat his meat and flour or tear holes in his clothes, books, and papers. Every night I'll bedevil his house with such a witches' sabbath of caterwauling tomcats from twenty leagues around, that he'll be unable to sleep and will leave your village.'

" 'Good!' said Carcajou — 'although if he doesn't sleep at night, he'll sleep during the day. Wouldn't it be better to wring his neck?'

" 'That's my business, not yours,' retorted the manitou angrily. 'I'll change myself into an invisible wolf, and then you'll see what a dreadful din all the village dogs make, howling all day long around Black-Robe's house!'

" 'Good!' exclaimed Carcajou. 'But what must I do to obtain these boons?'

" 'A mere nothing, my son. Renounce the Christian faith and pray to the little manitou, as did the Hurons of old.'

" 'But there is something that bothers me, my father,' said Otsitsot. 'When I die, where will I sleep

the first night?'

" 'In my paradise, my son.'

" 'Can one drink firewater in your paradise?'

" 'What a question!' cried the manitou. 'There are so many liquor swillers in my paradise that I'm obliged to keep them dead drunk from morning to night, and from night to morning, otherwise they'd make a fearful racket!'

" 'What a wonderful time they must have!' remarked Carcajou.[9] 'I too would like to enter your paradise and worship you, my father.'

" 'Very well,' said the manitou, 'but mark my words, if you return to the Christian faith I'll have my revenge on you and all your race. To begin with I'll wring your neck. I'll swim in the Oriawenrak every day, and your village will never get bigger or smaller.' The manitou spat in the river. 'In a hundred years the proportion of Huron to French blood running in your veins will be no more than my spittle mingled with the waters of the Oriawenrak.'

"With these words, the little old man disappeared. The great serpent lifted its head for an instant above the water, shooting forth flames, then vanished in the river."

A pensive Huron wears trade or treaty silver armbands and medallion in this portrait by Coke Smyth (c. 1840). McCord Museum of Canadian History, McGill University.

"What did Carcajou do then?" I asked, seeing Ohiarekwen[10] bow his head once more.

"He drank when he was thirsty," retorted the Huron gruffly.

I wish the manitou would wring *your* neck, thought I. You mean to empty my flask without finishing your legend, but we'll see about that!

"Listen to me, Louis. A Huron brave is a man of his word, and therefore I've relied on yours. But since you refuse to stand by our agreement, good evening to you, and may the devil quench your thirst if he's one of your friends!"

"Stop! Stop! my brother," called the Huron. "My heart is sore at the thought of it all, you understand, and it makes me sad."

"I understand, Louis. You want to drown your sorrows and I'd gladly believe the remedy would work. But a Huron brave must rise above these troubles. If you're a man of your word, tell me what happened to Carcajou, who has no doubt been in the devil's clutches for many a year."

The Indian drew himself up proudly. "Ohiarekwen is as true to his promise as the tide from the great lake that flows up the Saint Lawrence each day. But as for Carcajou, the old ones disagreed

about his fate, some saying yes, the devil got him, others no. He left the village the very night he spent with the manitou and only returned much later. By this time he was rich, and he gave a feast lasting eight days. The rum ran like the waters of the Oriawenrak in the village. Ah! those were the days! The young people amused themselves at Carcajou's expense, and didn't worry about where the money came from. But the old people's tongues wagged. Some said he'd found a treasure, others that he'd sold his soul to the devil, and since he was often absent for long periods, some thought he was fishing with two lines and had become a spy for both French and English, who were always at war in those days.

"After thoroughly enjoying himself for years, Otsitsot fell ill and asked for Aharatenha, the village doctor.

"You know Aharatenha, my brother?" the Huron asked me. "The one the Canadians call Coska?"

"Of course I know Coska," I retorted. "A clever, well-spoken man — a native doctor, as he himself says when tending the Canadians. But surely he wasn't the man Carcajou called for?"

"No, no," said Louis. "What a foolish thing for a lawyer to say, my brother. You see, all the

Aharatenhas knew good medicine, and this was perhaps the great-great-grandfather of the one you know.

"Well, when Aharatenha came with his bag full of healing herbs, he looked into the eyes of Otsitsot, sat down beside his bed, and muttered something through his teeth.

" 'What are you saying, my brother?' asked the sick man.

" 'I am saying,' said the doctor, 'get your snowshoes ready, for you have a long trail to cover.'

" 'But Aharatenha,' answered Otsitsot faintly, 'you can see very well I'm much too weak to walk on snowshoes!'

" 'Since you don't understand me, my brother, I'll have to speak more plainly,' snapped the doctor. 'You may see the sun set this evening, but you'll not see it rise tomorrow morning.'

" 'You know good medicine, Aharatenha. Give me some to drink, and if you cure me, I'll give you a great deal of money!'

" 'If you gave me a pile of money as big as the northern mountains, I still couldn't do a thing to save your life. The firewater is burning your stomach, and if I made you drink the whole Oriawenrak,

it wouldn't quench the fire that's devouring you any more than a little goblet of water could put out a bucketful of the pitch we use to caulk our bark canoes. You'd get nothing but flames.'

" '*Hoa!*' wailed Carcajou, hiding his head beneath his blanket.

" 'Now listen to me,' said Aharatenha. 'You have always lived like a dog, and if you don't want to roast in hell once you're dead, on a brazier that all the snows of Canada and all the water in the great lake will never put out, send as fast as you can for Black-Robe.'

"At that very moment, a little old man pushed open the door of the house and began shouting, 'Hurry up, Otsitsot, send for Black-Robe!' And he fell to laughing in such a mocking, diabolical manner that everyone present shook with fear.

" 'I'm choking!' cried Carcajou. 'Somebody's strangling me! Quick! Get Black-Robe!'

Someone ran to get the missionary, but he was away from home. By the time he returned, Carcajou was as cold as a bullfrog in Lake Saint Charles. The priest recounted how a little old man had come and told him to go to Quebec as quickly as possible, for his brother had fallen suddenly ill and wanted to

see him before dying. The old people believed the devil had played a trick, for when the priest got to Quebec he found his brother perfectly healthy."

"Louis, I was right in telling you the devil would finally get that dog of a Carcajou in his clutches."

"What do you know about it?" responded the Huron slowly. "It's none of your business, nor mine. Perhaps he had a good time before dying."

Hearing Ohiarekwen express such charitable Christian sentiments, I thought he must have forgotten the second article of our treaty, and accordingly I bade him good evening. He promptly reminded me of it, however, and I was obliged to pour him one for the road.

"General Wolfe's Statue"

TRANSLATOR'S ADVICE TO THE READER

Speculating on historical details of old Quebec was a favourite pastime among the elderly citizens of the city in the mid nineteenth century, and de Gaspé was no exception. Modern readers may wonder why this statue of General Wolfe should have been a subject of such keen interest.

The colourful statue, which may be seen today in the library of the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec on the Rue Stanislas in Quebec City, was a familiar sight on Rue Saint-Jean for nearly a century. Carved in the commanding spirit of a figure on a bowsprit, its site came to be called "Wolfe's Corner" by generations of Quebec citizens, French and English alike.

Its appeal was such that, according to C.-B. Casgrain in a paper read before the Royal Society of Canada, "In 1838–39, some playful *middies* of the Royal Navy took down the statue in a youthful

freak, and gave it a sea trip to Calcutta on a man-of-war, whence it came back with a broken arm." After reposing for a time in what is now the Garrison Club, "it was restored and replaced in its niche."

The aging statue was restored and presented to the Quebec Literary and Historical Society in 1898 by the Bell Telephone Company, then owner of the building. A second General Wolfe by the wood-carver Jobin took the place of the first. It braved the rigours of Quebec winters until February 1964, when a flurry of local press articles remarked on the disappearance of the Quebec landmark. Had the General been kidnapped once again? Was the removal of the British hero the result of a threatening phone call? It was being cleaned, said a noncommittal spokesman for the owner of the building, Esmond Léonard. *Le Soleil* revealed that there were two statues, and reviewed the history of the original. Shortly afterward, the spruced-up second statue went on view in the museum of the Royal 22nd Regiment — Canada's legendary "Van Doos" — in the Quebec Citadel. It became the property of the museum in 1977, a legacy under the late Monsieur Léonard's will.

GENERAL WOLFE'S STATUE[1]

I was staying downriver with my son-in-law, Seigneur Fraser,[A] at Rivière-du-Loup, when I read in the *Journal du Québec* of September 19 last the following article:

"A reader writes from the District of Trois-Rivières as follows:

" 'I have just read an extract from the *Mémoires de P. A. de Gaspé*, esquire, in the *Echo du Cabinet*. In it I find the account of his scuffles with Ives Cholet,[B] but he has neglected to mention that the city of Quebec is indebted to this sculptor for the statue of General Wolfe that adorns the corner of the Rue du Palais and the Rue Saint-Jean.' "

Although this omission is a very minor sin, I felt it deserved attention nonetheless. I was then anxious for this same paper to publish a statement explaining that, until the very day, I had no idea

Joseph Légaré (1797–1855), one of Canada's first native-born landscape painters of note, gave full reign to Romantic imagination in this painting of Wolfe's statue in a woodland setting, with a carefully posed Indian for company. The fluid stance of the figure as well as the raised right arm (rather than the left) resemble the work now in the Museum of the Royal 22nd Regiment in the Quebec Citadel rather than the original. This second statue replaced the first after the latter was donated to the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec in 1898. A.55.109.P. Musée du Québec. Photo: Patrick Altman.

that General Wolfe's statue was the work of Ives Cholet. For a reason which the reader will perhaps appreciate, I preferred to wait until returning to Quebec. It seemed to me the history of this statue from days of old might interest the present generation, and that I would be more likely to find worthwhile information on the subject once back in the city. However, poor Ives Cholet and his statue — for there *is* a statue — had already slipped my mind when my attention was again caught by the following article, published in the same paper on September 22.

"Our correspondent from the District of Trois-Rivières, whose words on Ives Cholet and General Wolfe's statue we quoted the other day, has written us on the 20th concerning the same subject:

" 'You referred to my little note about Ives Cholet and General Wolfe's statue, which adorns the corner of the Rue Saint-Jean and the Rue du Palais. You may wish to complete this note by adding that Cholet and his brothers, carpenters and sculptors, had a shop in the Rue Saint-Louis. They did some work for an English innkeeper named Hipps who wanted a statue of General Wolfe for a sign. The officers of the 15th regiment were garrisoned in

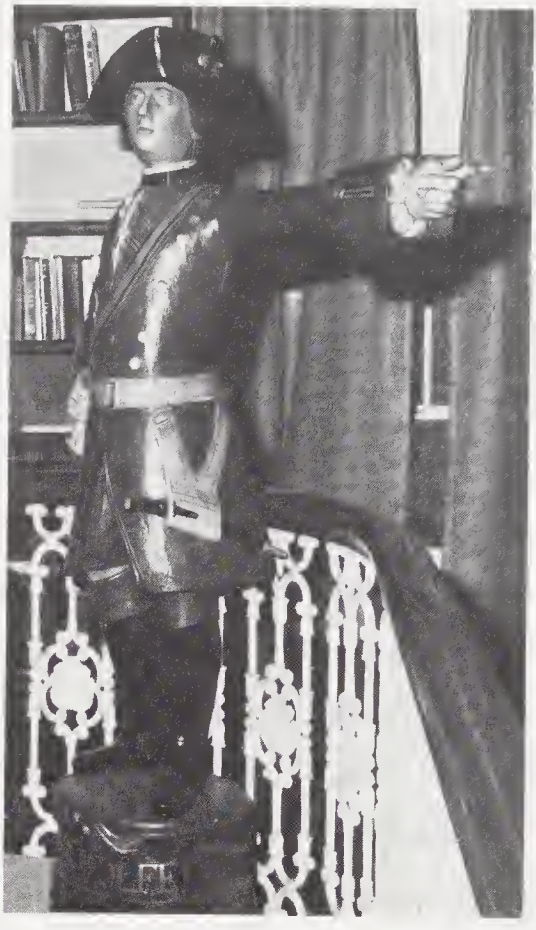
Quebec at the time, and they supplied the brothers with a likeness of Wolfe in a commanding pose. Cholet worked as best he could under their direction, and the combined result of their instructions and his labour was the statue in question. People used to say it bore a fair likeness, not to General Wolfe, but to portraits of this glorious leader that were once circulated.' "[C]

While morally certain that the statue of General Wolfe had not been carved by the Ives Cholet whom I knew, this second note was so precise that it shook my confidence, although I was still not convinced. How could I really believe that the members of the Cholet family, with whom I was familiar for some twenty years, would have said nothing about a statue that we had spoken of a hundred times, and that would have been a source of pride. True, Ives was a taciturn fellow, but his brother Hyacinth was a chatterbox and something of a braggart. Is it likely he would have held his tongue on such a subject? I boarded for nearly five years with his three sisters, the Widow Corbin, Catiche (Catherine), and Charlotte Cholet. They used to take immense pride in showing off two mahogany-framed mirrors, one carved by Ives and the other by Hyacinthe. Surely

they would have mentioned Wolfe's statue in this connection?

I was in a hurry to return to Quebec and clear up this mystery. If any one could tell me, I knew it would be Assistant Commissary General Thompson,[D] born in Quebec City and its oldest living citizen. I was not wrong to wait, for here is his note — an extract from a journal kept by his father, a veteran of General Wolfe's army who died in Quebec in the year 1831 at the patriarchal age of ninety-nine.[E]

"We had a loyal fellow in Quebec, one George Phipps (Hips), a butcher, who own'd that house at the corner of Palace and John Streets, still called 'Wolfe's Corner,' and it happened to have a niche, probably intended for the figure of some saint;[2] he was very anxious to fill it up, and he thought he could have nothing better than the statue of *General Wolfe*; but he did not know how to set about getting one. At last he finds out two French sculptors, who were brothers, of the name of Chaulette,[F] and he asked me if I thought I could direct them how to make the likeness of the General in wood. I said I would, at all events, have no objection to undertake it, and accordingly they, the



Over 200 years old, the much-restored statue of General Wolfe is reminiscent of a ship's figurehead as it gazes benignly over the heads of visitors to the library of the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec. A local landmark for over 100 years, it originally stood in a niche at the corner of the Rue Saint-Jean and Rue du Palais. In 1898 it was presented to the Society, and another statue was commissioned to take its place. An engraving of the statue in its niche can be seen in the Museum of the Royal 22nd Regiment in the Quebec Citadel. Photo: W.B. Edwards Inc., by kind permission of the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec.

Chaulettes, tried several sketches, but they made a poor job of it after all.

"The front face is no likeness at all, and the profile is all they could hit upon, and which is good. The body gives a poor idea of the General, who was tall and straight as a rush, so that, after my best endeavours to describe his person (and I knew it well), and for which purpose I attended every day at their workshop. . . . I say we made a poor General Wolfe of it."[6]

Well, I thought to myself, I must indeed be a naturally cussed octagenarian to spurn such convincing evidence as this. Yet I shook my head despite this sagacious reflection. My memory was not playing me false, I felt sure. How could I forget such an important detail when I remember the most insignificant things about my childhood and youth? With this in mind, I asked my venerable friend, Assistant Commissary General Thompson, whether he knew the same Cholet family I had known.

"Certainly," said he. "The two brothers were carpenters."

"Do you believe these two carpenters carved General Wolfe's statue?" I asked.

"Given their age, I don't think so," he replied.

"My father often told me that Phipps had put up this statue before the Catholic cathedral was rebuilt. It had been burned in the siege of 1759. Phipps was a butcher by trade, and I must say to his shame that he appropriated the church ruins as a pen for his livestock."

Mr. Thompson, one of the most reputable men I know, seemed pained at making this admission. But for me it shed a gleam of light.

Now, thought I after this conversation, I'll simply find out exactly when the Quebec cathedral was rebuilt, then get extracts of my Cholet brothers' baptismal certificates, and the mystery of who carved the statue will be solved. I put the proposition to my eminent relative and friend, the Abbé Casgrain,[H] and two days later the indefatigable abbé sent me the information I desired.

"The cathedral was completely rebuilt between 1746 and 1748," he wrote, "but was burned again in 1759 during the siege of Quebec. Once the parishioners had returned to the city, services were held in the Ursulines' church until December 4, 1764, and then in the seminary chapel rebuilt after the siege. The cathedral was rebuilt between 1768 and 1771, and dedicated on April 14, 1771."

Let us look now at the Cholet family genealogy, which I also owe to the Abbé Casgrain's kindness.

"The first Cholet to come to Canada was Pierre Cholet, shipwright, son of Jacques Cholet and Marie Blanchard of the parish of Saint-George [*sic*] on the Ile d'Oléron in the diocese of Xaintes.[1] On February 4, 1743, he married Marie-Catherine Pelot, *dite* Laflèche. They had issue:

"Pierre, born April 26, 1743, deceased September 12 of the same year.

"Timothée, born October 77, 1744.

"Louis-François, born March 25, 1746, deceased January 16, 1748.

"Marie-Catherine, born October 19, 1747.

"Marguerite, born March 25, 1749.

"Pierre, born October 20, 1750.

"Louis, born September 13, 1751, died the 19th of the same month, 1751.

"Ignace, born October 20, 1752.

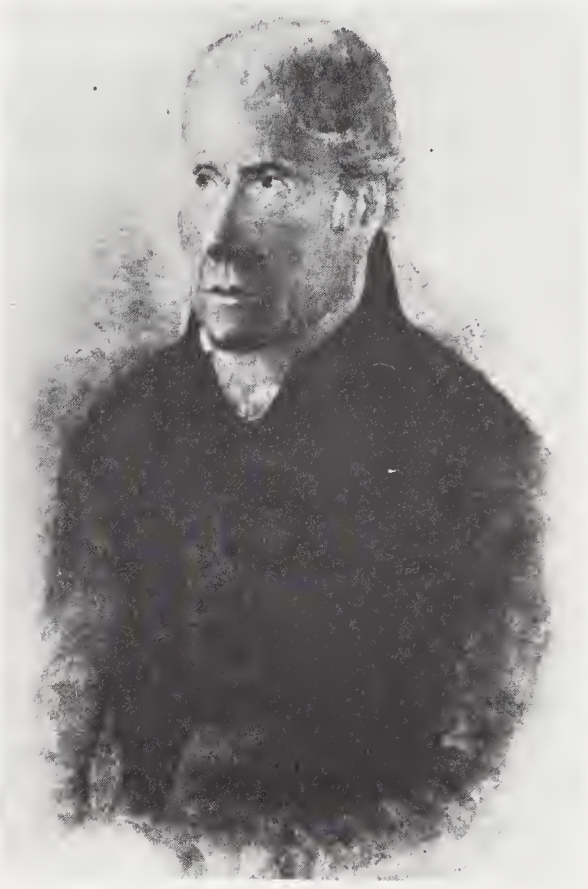
"Jean, born December 20, 1754.

"Louise-Charles [*sic*], born April 25, 1756.

"Dominique, born January 22, 1758, died January 23, 1758.

"Ives, born April 8, 1761."

These two authentic extracts show that, even



Possibly a portrait of Sergeant James Thompson (1733–1830), last surviving veteran of the Battle of the Plains of Abraham. A military engineer by profession, James Thompson was a well-known figure in Quebec. He had helped repulse the attacking Americans outside the walls of Quebec City on December 31, 1775, and for many years kept the sword of Richard Montgomery, the slain American commander, as a relic. For most of his active career, Thompson kept a comprehensive journal which was subsequently donated to the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec. This journal is now housed in the Quebec Archives. From the A.J.B. Milborne Collection, Public Archives of Canada, PA-148846.

supposing Wolfe's statue had not been carved until the parish church was consecrated in 1771, Ives Cholet could not be the sculptor, since he was barely ten years old at the time. If we accept Mr. Thompson's version, he would have been barely five years old. So here I am, absolved of all blame for omitting this detail about Ives Cholet.

Hyacinthe Cholet, whom I mentioned earlier, looked much younger than his brother Ives. He often told me how he and the urchins of Quebec used to play at soldiers while the Americans were besieging the city in 1775. "We were divided into two camps — the English and American armies," he used to say. "The snowball fights were tremendous, and we made as much noise as the armies that really were besieging and defending Quebec." Hyacinthe's baptismal certificate is missing from the registers, but this is merely further proof that he was a very young child in 1771, and so the honour of working on General Wolfe's statue can't revert to him, either.[3]

One of the Cholet brothers was killed in a brawl on the Beauport parish feast day, but the family never spoke of him. His foe split his skull with a bottle. I suppose it was a painful subject and a sad

memory for them. However, my own family often described the unfortunate young man's lamentable end, adding that out of regard for the murderer's sister and aged mother, the Cholet family never laid any formal charge. But innocent blood cried to heaven for vengeance and the hand of God weighed heavily on the murderer. The avenging furies entered D_____'s soul, and with them the thirst for bloodshed. He was sentenced in Montreal to a long prison term for a second assault, having fired a pistol pointblank at a man whom he suspected of wanting to arrest him for debt. Far from from coming to his senses, he emerged more bloodthirsty than ever after serving his term. D_____ then entered the service of a North West trader, I think it was, and murdered his master. He was brought back to Quebec, condemned to death for this second murder, and executed in Montreal. My friend Major Lafleur, who seems to be a walking encyclopedia of the old days, yesterday showed me the house in Quebec where the mother and sister of D_____ lived until the heartbroken women betook themselves to the exile of New Orleans.

It's not clear to me which of the Cholets was murdered by D_____. According to Quebec parish

registers, it must have been either Pierre, born in 1750, or Jean, born in 1754. I have not seen the burial certificates.

It was on All Souls' Day of the year 1794 that I went to board with the Cholet sisters. We gathered for evening prayers. Old Catiche (Catherine) recited the usual prayers and the rosary for All Souls, then added, "Let us pray for the soul of poor Ignace." Who was Ignace, I asked? "One of our brothers. He went off travelling some twenty years ago," she replied, using an expression common among the populace. "The last we heard of him, he'd died in a shipwreck."

The next summer, a somewhat tipsy sailor came into the house just as dusk was falling. He leaned back against the door and started talking English. No one understood a word, apart from the *goddams* with which he liberally peppered his conversation. The poor old spinsters had only me for company.

"Run and get Hyacinthe," they said, taking fright.

I tried to leave, but the sailor shoved me back.

"Hove to, cabinboy!" said he in French, pointing to the second-storey window of the room we were in, "or I'll toss you over the bulwarks."

Although the women were a little comforted at hearing him speak their tongue, they took his threat seriously and begged him not to harm the child. "What do you want?" they asked him.

"What do I want? Thunder and lightning! Why, to kiss you both, even though you're somewhat weathered by years of rough seas!"

"You're not very polite for a Frenchman," retorted Catiche, who was nudging fifty.

"Well, blow me down! It seems you don't take kindly to being told your rigging's been battered by the waves! But no hard feelings, mind. I've come to give you news of a jolly fellow you used to call your brother Ignace, twenty years agone."

"What!" shrieked the two sisters. "Poor Ignace is still alive? And us praying for him and having masses said for the repose of his soul!"

"Masses and prayers won't do him no good at this point, m'lovelies, since he's not much better a fellow today than he was when he bid you *adieux* these twenty years past — unless you can credit them to those you'll have said when the bo'sun makes him walk the plank in the wide Atlantic with a thirty-pound cannonball tied to his feet."

"Sit down, Master Sailor, and tell us about poor

Ignace," said Charlotte.

"May a shark eat me raw if these two nitwits don't recognize me! Come on, come kiss Ignace, send for Hyacinthe, Ives, and Marguerite (the Widow Corbin) if they're not down in Davy Jones' locker by now."

Soon the whole family had gathered to celebrate with an improvised supper at the Widow Corbin's home. Ignace, who was a ships's carpenter, didn't return to his vessel until next morning.

Although Ignace Cholet had been at sea for twenty years, he wasn't a regular sailor. As a ship's carpenter he enjoyed certain privileges, one of the most important being that he was safe from the warships' press-gangs, a danger for all sailors. This was the only time I ever saw him, for it was vacation time, and when I returned to Quebec he had gone. His family never saw hide nor hair of him again.

This, then, is the only Cholet brother known to me — albeit he passed like a shadow in my childhood memories — who might have worked on the statue of General Wolfe. He was born in 1752 and would have been nineteen when the statue was carved, although if we accept Mr. Thompson's version, Ignace would have been only fifteen or

sixteen. The statue is certainly the work of my Cholet family, nevertheless, for it was the only one of that name in Quebec. All the Canadians knew one another in those days. With only one parish church, it could hardly have been otherwise.

But to return to my story, how was it that the Cholet family never mentioned a statue carved by one of their brothers? I find it a complete mystery, although the reader may not care one way or the other. As for my old friend Ives, I ask forgiveness of his shade if I am guilty of an oversight — but in that case how can we account for his being only ten when the statue was carved?

The statue of General Wolfe is the work of two Cholet brothers — of that I have no doubt. The explanation may be that the brother who was so barbarously murdered worked on the statue. Might the family not have shrunk from the thought of linking him with a work that evoked such bitter memories?

Notes and Annotations

NOTES TO THE INTRODUCTION

[A] Luc Lacourcière, "L'Enjeu des *Anciens Canadiens*," *Les Cahiers des dix* (1967) 22: 223–254.

[B] Pierre-Georges Roy, *La Famille Aubert de Gaspé* (Lévis: J.E. Mercier, 1907), p. 174.

[C] Lacourcière, p. 245–246.

[D] J.-B.-A. Ferland, *Cours d'histoire du Canada*, vol. 1 (Quebec: Augustin Côté, 1861), pp. 97, 100, as cited in Serge Gagnon, *Quebec and its Historians: 1840–1920*, trans. Yves Brunelle (Montreal: Harvest House, 1982), p. 58.

Yellow-Wolf, Malecite Chieftain of Old

FOOTNOTES TO THE FIRST EDITION

[1.] God of war.

[2.] The Indians used the expression "scouting" [*aller à la découverte*] for going on the warpath. With both Indians and Canadians of old, war involved surprise and ambush.

[3.] *Sic.* [Original editor's note.]

[4.] In the author's youth, the Indians went in such terror of the smallpox that Canadian women, who when alone feared visiting Indians, often shouted, "We have the smallpox here!" and the Indians would take to their heels. This cruel malady took a terrible toll among them, and it was rare for an infected Indian to survive.

Yellow-Wolf, Malecite Chieftain of Old

TRANSLATOR'S ANNOTATIONS

A. The once-migratory Malecites (or Maliseets) are an Amerindian people closely related to the Algonkian-speaking Micmacs, now mainly living in southern New Brunswick. At one time their hunting territory reached to the Saint Lawrence River opposite Tadoussac. They were members of the Abenaki confederacy and therefore allied with the French against the Iroquois confederacy, which sided with the English in the bloody fur trade wars. See Jacques Rousseau and George W. Brown, "The Indians of Northeastern North America," in *Readings in Canadian History: Pre-Confederation*, 2d ed. (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston of Canada Limited, 1986), p. 4.

B. The de Gaspé manor house near Saint-Jean Port-Joli stood among shore meadows on the south bank of the Saint Lawrence River, below Quebec City. The back or north side of the house overlooked fields running down to the river and the beach where Yellow-Wolf pitched his tent. The south or front side faced inland toward the nearby road, on the far side of which rose a steep, rocky bluff or cape.

C. It is not easy for modern readers to understand in context the documented cruelty of many Amerindian groups toward captives. In principle, the brave sufferer gained inestimable honour in the afterworld and therefore welcomed and even incited torture, much as the early Christians welcomed martyrdom. The coward, by contrast, brought dishonour to his name and family. The Malecites, including the women, were as ferocious as their enemies

toward captives, according to Captain William Pote (1745) who found himself in this unenviable position. Another captive, John Gyles, recounted how "my unfortunate brother [and] . . . another Englishman . . . were both tortured at a stake by fire for some time; then their noses and ears were cut off, and they [were] made to eat them. After this they were burnt to death at the stake." Wilson D. Wallis and Ruth Sawtell Wallis, *The Malecite Indians of New Brunswick* (Ottawa: Dept. of Northern Affairs and Natural Resources, 1957), p. 9.

D. De Gaspé inserts the word "skirts" in brackets to define the word *matchiotes.*

Woman of the Foxes

FOOTNOTES TO THE FIRST EDITION

1. The Iroquois.

2. Monsieur Jean-Baptiste Couillard [b. 1729], seigneur of Saint-Thomas and Saint-Pierre, was killed by the English on September 14, 1759, as was Monsieur Joseph Couillard, ecclesiastic [a cousin], and both were buried in the church of Saint-Thomas, September 28, 1759. (*Note by the Abbé Tanguay.*) [Tanguay's *Dictionnaire généalogique* gives September 22, 1759, as the date of burial.]

3. Known equally as Berthier or Bellechasse Bay.

4. I never knew this Monsieur Couillard, and some readers may feel I have assigned him a rather arbitrary rôle. However I did know his son, also Jean-Baptiste [d. 1808], and I can vouch for having painted *him* to the life. Although

very scholarly, he was anything but a pedant. At the same time he thought, with a certain childlike naivete, that all the world was as knowledgeable as himself. When I was barely eleven, he held forth to me on the abstract sciences and subjects of advanced philosophy, unmindful of my father's expostulations.

"Couillard, it's quite obvious the child doesn't know what you're talking about!" said my father, hitching me up on his shoulders.

"He understands me perfectly well, *cher ami*," replied Monsieur Couillard, looking at me with an air of angelic sweetness unlike any other I ever saw. "Isn't that so, Philippe — you understand me?"

I bobbed my head like a jack-in-the-box, unwilling to hurt his feelings and perhaps inspired by a touch of vanity.

"I knew Philippe understood me, *cher ami!*" cried Couillard, looking at my father.

If a farmer expressed to Monsieur Couillard his fear that the full August moon would harm the field peas, the vegetables, and whatnot, the "Jean-Baptiste," as they call farmers in Canada, would be treated to a forty-five-minute dissertation on astronomy. Only after travelling through the entire zodiac had the farmer any chance of escaping. It is because I consider Captain Couillard's character — that of the unintentional pedant, if I may express it thus — so unique that I describe him here. It is far from my intention to mock the memory of a *gentilhomme* possessed of all the qualities and virtues that honour the human race.

5. Civilized man needs a lot of time to build a house, but the primitive Indian needs scarcely an hour. A four-seater

birch-bark canoe was almost always sufficient to carry an Indian family, which rarely consisted of more than four members — father, mother, and one or two children. There was never any surplus baggage, either, for all was reduced the bare necessities. A gun, a powder horn, a pouch of lead, a small kettle, a dog about the size of a fox, and a roll of birchbark made up the cargo. A pole seven or eight feet long was stuck in the ground, and a fine wigwam was soon constructed to provide shelter for the whole family.

6. The magnificent maple grove that now crowns the western bluff of Berthier Bay must have stretched right to the Bellechasse River in other times. This pretty river empties into the southern end of the small bay, after gushing forth, much to the spectator's surprise, from the middle of a little wood containing many different species of trees and shrubs.

This fine domain has been in my family for about seventy years. My late maternal uncle, Xavier-Roch de Lanaudière, (deputy adjutant-general of militia) and co-seigneur of Saint-Valier, struck by the beauty of the place, bought the land and built a *pied-à-terre* toward the middle of the bay shore, on a mound about a hundred feet back from the river. His two sisters inherited it after his death and built an addition to the little house, later ceding the domain to their nephew, the late Mr. John Young, who also built a considerable addition onto this charming "cottage."

This fine property now belongs to my son-in-law, the Honourable Charles Alleyn, sheriff of the District of Quebec, who bought it in order to keep it in the family. And despite the size of the cottage, it is still too small for his

hospitable Irish heart. I have spent delightful evenings seated around a small fire on the shore, chatting with him and his wife, while their children played on the sandy beach, their cries of joy being — in the words of a great poet — so shrill that they seemed to be in physical pain.

7. The price of a beaver coat in my childhood was 50 louis.

Woman of the Foxes

TRANSLATOR'S ANNOTATIONS

A. André Marie Chénier (1762–1794), a French writer born in Constantinople, was active in the early days of the Revolution, but turned against its excesses and was later guillotined. His *Poèmes, Élégies, Idylles* first appeared in 1819.

B. Amerindian slaves were not an unusual phenomenon in New France at this time. Slavery was so customary among the Indians themselves, according to historian Marcel Trudel, citing Lohantan (*Voyages*, letter of May 26, 1688), that the terms for "prisoner" and "slave" were synonymous. The Pawnee tribes of the Nebraska region were a popular target for the supply of slaves by Amerindian middlemen. In 1709 the ownership and trading of blacks and Pawnees was legalized in New France, and the French word for Pawnee — *panis* — came to mean an Amerindian slave, although various civil registers show that about a third came from other tribes. Trudel found a total of 2,472 Amerindian slaves recorded, over two-thirds during the French régime.

The Foxes, an Iroquoian tribe originally found on the western shore of Lake Michigan, began appearing as slaves following hostilities between the Iroquois and the French in 1716 and 1730. The Abenakis, allies of the French, were in the habit of raiding English colonies and capturing Indian and black slaves whom they usually sold in Montreal.

A number of owners freed their slaves, although where long association and ties of affection existed, slaves were not always willing to be freed. Lisette, the mulatto slave purchased by de Gaspé's grandfather Philippe-Ignace around 1787, indignantly rejected her liberty: "She didn't give *that* for her emancipation, said she, snapping her fingers, for she had as much right to stay in the house where she was brought up as her master and all his family."

The *panisse* of this tale, baptized Marie-Geneviève Couillard, was probably one of the last Amerindians to die a slave. Marcel Trudel, *L'Esclavage au Canada française: Histoire et conditions de l'esclavage* (Quebec: Presses de l'Université de Laval, 1960), pp. 6, 41, 60, 73, 312, 313, 318, 329. Philippe-Joseph Aubert de Gaspé, *Les Anciens Canadiens* (1863; Montreal: Librairie Beauchemin Ltée, 1913), p. 248.

[C.] Abbé Cyprien Tanguay (1819–1902), priest, archivist, statistician, was the author of a number of works, including the valuable *Dictionnaire généalogique des familles canadiennes.* (Lejeune, *Dictionnaire générale du Canada*, II, 695.)

[D.] Saint-Thomas de Montmagny, known in carly times as Pointe à la Caille, now Montmagny. Located a few miles below Quebec on the South Shore of the Saint Lawrence

River, it lay within the seigneurie of Rivière-du-Sud.

E. Captain Jean-Baptiste Couillard de l'Épinay (1729–1759) was *seigneur primitif* (principal seigneur among co-seigneurs) of the fief of Rivière-du-Sud, and a captain of militia. We may consider this tale as being loosely based on fact, since the author himself notes that he is using the character traits of Captain Couillard's son, whom he knew well, in portraying the father (see author's note 4 above).

For the record, however, the historical Captain Couillard was only 17 in 1746, around the time of the first episode. Possibly the actual purchase of the slave occured after 1754, as the story refers to the captain's "late" father's gun and powder horn. A more appropriate figure would have been the captain's father, Louis Couillard de l'Épinay (1694–1754), seigneur of Saint-Thomas and Saint-Pierre. He would have been about 52 at the time, his own father was dead, and he had a small son of six, details that are more in keeping with the episode.

Couillards and de Gaspés were friends and South Shore neighbours for generations. Captain Jean-Baptiste Couillard was a family hero who fought at the Plains of Abraham and was killed the following day (September 14, 1759) in a skirmish with a party of 60 English soldiers, while returning to Saint-Thomas to defend his home. The British reportedly ravaged everything in Saint-Thomas except the church. Burial services for the mutilated bodies of Couillard and his friends were held a week later.

The young widow, Marie-Geneviève Alliés (b. 1739, m. 1755) took over the management of the seigneurie with the help of her father, the notary André Alliés, who then came

to live at the manor house with his wife and remained there until his death. No doubt, as custom and circumstances dictated, such family members as André-Thomas Couillard (b. 1738), a young priest and brother of the slain seigneur, made their home at the manor as well.

Madame Couillard had given birth to the couple's only child (three others had died at birth) two months before her husband's death. This child was the Jean-Baptiste Couillard de l'Épinay (1759–1808) described in note 4, father of the author's lifelong friend, Dr. Antoine-Gaspard Couillard.

Abbé Azarie Couillard Després, *La Première Famille française au Canada, ses alliés et ses descendants* (Montreal: Imprimerie de l'École Catholique des Sourds-Muets, Mile-End, 1906), p. 297, and *Histoire des seigneurs de la Rivière-du-Sud et de leurs alliés* (Saint-Hyacinthe: Imprimerie de "La Tribune," 1912), pp. 278, 283, 321, 343. Pierre-Georges Roy, *Bulletin des recherches historiques*, 24 (1918), pp. 372–374. Abbé Cyprien Tanguay, *Dictionnaire généalogique des familles canadiennes depuis la fondation de la colonie jusqu'à nos jours*, vol. 3 (Montreal: Eusèbe Senécal & Fils, 1887), pp. 162–165.

F. "Canot" (*Divers*, p. 12). This generally meant "canoe" before the middle of the nineteenth century, according to J.M. Lemoine. However, de Gaspé describes the craft in this tale as having sails, oars and a tiller, and we can assume he had in mind the type of small rowboat with sail of the French régime shown in such early illustrations as "View of the town of Trois-Rivières in Canada . . . ." (anon., 1721), Edward E. Ayer Collection, the Newberry Library, Chicago.

Numerous drawings and prints show birchbark canoes as a common form of being ferried about in the days before bridges crossed the Saint Lawrence, and de Gaspé gives an amusing anecdote on the subject in his notes to chapter 1 of *Les Anciens Canadiens. Records of Our History: Taking Root, Canada from 1700 to 1760* ed. André Vachon (Ottawa: Public Archives Canada, 1985), p. 62. J.M. Le Moine, *The Chronicles of the St. Lawrence* (Montreal: Dawson Bros., 1880), 344, 345.

[c.] "Even as Christians, the Abenakis retained their warlike habits and natural ferocity," wrote historian Thomas-M. Charland. Father Joseph-Anselme Maurault, whose lengthy *Histoire des Abenakis* appeared in 1866, remarked the "the terror they inspired among the English colonies and the Iroquois is a most amazing thing" for a people "who never numbered more than 3,000." The Abenakis originally came from the region of the Kennebec and Penobscot Rivers in Maine. At their own request, Jesuit missions were established among them between 1646 and 1660. Their early relations with the English were soured by the latter's refusal to come to their aid against the Iroquois. The Abenaki eventually retreated to the protection of the Saint-François, Bécancour, and Mississquoi River missions, vowing implacable vengeance against the English. They became the firm allies of the French. The famous Deerfield massacre was but one of the many raids in which they were involved, usually with the official backing or participation of the French. The English repaid the attackers with such expeditions as Major Roger's bloody raid on the Saint-François mission in 1759. Prisoners (Indian, black, or white) were

often sold, sometimes in return for a government bounty, or to Canadians who used them as domestic servants. The Abenakis hunted beaver for the fur trade, but otherwise had a fairly fragile economy based on hunting, fishing, gathering and some agriculture. Thomas-M. Charland, *Histoire des Abénakis d'Odanak (1635–1937)* (Montreal: Les Éditions du Lévrier, 1964), pp. 11–13, 51–52, 49, 53, 54, 58–60. Joseph-Anselme Maurault, *Histoire des Abenakis, depuis 1605 jusqu'à nos jours* (Sorel: Imprimé à l'atélier typographique de la Gazette de Sorel, 1866), p. 229.

H. "Onontio" (Great Mountain) was originally the Indian name for Charles Huault, Sieur de Montmagny (1583?-1653), governor of New France from 1636 to 1648. The name continued to be used for governors of New France. *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, 1:372–374.

I. As Captain Couillard was killed in 1759, the man in this anecdote was possibly Madame Couillard's father or her late husband's younger brother, André-Thomas, whose general presence could be inferred from his signature on the Indian slave's baptismal certificate.

J. This Madame Couillard was Marie-Angélique Chaussegros de Léry (1756–1841), wife of Jean-Baptiste Couillard de l'Épinay, 1759–1808. *Bulletin des recherches historiques*, 40 (1934): 594–595.

K. The Honourable Antoine-Gaspard Couillard de l'Épinay (1787–1847), physician and legislative councillor. *Bulletin des recherches historiques*, 50 (1955): 139.

L. In his notes to chapters 5 and 6 of *Les Anciens Canadiens*, de Gaspé recounts further anecdotes about Seigneur Couillard and gives an account of his last illness.

For the historical record, he died in December 1808, nearly three months (not "about three days") after the death of La Grosse. He fell ill upon returning from Montreal, and remained in a boarding house in Quebec, too sick to be moved to Saint-Thomas. *Les Anciens Canadiens*. pp. 314–320.

Big Louis and the Legend of Indian Lorette

FOOTNOTES TO THE FIRST EDITION

[1] Published in *Le Foyer canadien.*(Publisher's note.) ["Le Village indien de la Jeune Lorette (Tradition)," Vol. 4, (1866) p. 536–551.]

[2] [Ohiarek8en in the original French.] The figure 8 is pronounced as "ou" in the Huron language. Ohiarek8en means snake. [For ease of reading, an anglicized spelling is used here. *Trans.*]

[3] Sasennio was an adopted Iroquois name. [See de Gaspé's memoirs, *A Man of Sentiment*, p. 178, where "Big Vincent" is described as being the best runner in the seminary, and some six years older than the author.]

[4] At the time, I was unaware that Ohiarekwen repaid those who advanced him money with scrupulous exactitude, hence my refusal.

[5] The author is not positive as to the name of this Indian.

[6] The word Otsitsot [for wolverine] means evildoer in Huron. If one credits accounts of North American aborigenals and Canadian hunters of yesteryear, the Otsitsot well

merited its name. All agreed in attributing to it a spirit of malevolence and almost diabolical mischief. It not only uncovered and destroyed the snares of the Indian hunters of old, but had apparently guessed the mechanical secret of firearms. When hunters laid aside their guns in the forest, the Otsitsot would open the flintlock pans and fill them with snow, or most often with excrement. [To this day, wolverines (really giant weasels) "are notoriously adept at working traplines." The French name, Carcajou or wolverine, was a synonym for a wily thief in popular French-Canadian parlance. *Wild Animals of North America* (Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society, 1987), p. 259, *Glossaire du parler français au Canada* (1930; repr. Quebec: Presses de l'Université Laval, 1968), p. 173.]

7. The tradition of the Great Serpent is still alive among the Indians of Jeune Lorette. Paul Tahourhenché (Daybreak) recently told me that next morning the people of his tribe followed the trail left by the serpent as it passed through their village in the night. They lost it among the pebblestones of the Saint Charles River, about an arpent below their church. The furrow left by the serpent was as big as the trail of a huge pine dragged over the ground. "But," added Paul, "I never heard tell that the village must stay the same size because the serpent swam in the Oriawenrak."

Something always remains of childhood impressions, which makes me think that Paul was sensitive about an admission that was humiliating to his tribe, for he added, "It is true that my village stayed the same size for a long time, but within the last ten years it has grown." Paul

Tahourhenché might also have added that it is thanks to his talent, perseveranee, and industry that his village is prospering and inereasing at a remarkable rate. This Huron prince, while working for the good of his tribe, has built a fine, independent fortune for himself as well. What I admire about him is that he reealls with pride the Huron blood in his veins.

8. The sound of the angry rattlesnake somewhat resembles the *chichicouè*, an instrument used by the Indians to beat time when they daneed.

9. Careajou's remark reminds me of a little interehange I overheard between two eonfirmed drunkards who met in the Lower Town marketplaee.

"Where've you been?"

"To a wedding."

"Did you have a good time?"

"*Ah, mon cher!* Three days dead drunk, passed out — *non compos mentis.*"

"You must have had a *really* good time!"

10. Ohiarek8en [Ohiarekwen] means serpent in the Huron language, and by sheer coincidence it was the Serpent [Big Louis] who recounted this legend to me.

Big Louis and the Legend of Indian Lorette

TRANSLATOR'S ANNOTATIONS

A. Possibly the fief of Saint Gabriel in the Distriet of Quebee, a sizeable inland seigneurial holding in the area of Jeune Lorette, extending into the hinterland and ineluding

part of the Saint Charles River. See Louise Dechêne's map, "The Seigneuries," *The Historical Atlas of Canada*, 1: plate 51, fief listed as no. 17 in the District of Quebec.

In plate 47, "Native Resettlement, 1635–1800" of the same work, Bruce G. Trigger writes "In 1650 and 1651, following their defeat by the Iroquois, 600 Huron Christians came as refugees to Quebec, where their descendents still live." They had eventually migrated from Sillery to Nouvelle Lorette (about eight miles inland from Quebec City, also referred to as Jeune Lorette or Indian Lorette), a Jesuit mission, by 1697. A hunting territory of forty arpents in the neighbourhood was set aside for their use. *The Historical Atlas of Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987). See also Trigger, *The Children of Aataentsic* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press, 1976), pp. 818–820.

B. "The first symbols of temperance placed in the hands of members [of the Société de tempérance founded in Lower Canada by Father Charles Chiniquy] were printed cards showing the name of the member, the date of his pledge, and the signature of the parish priest." Stanislas Lemay Hugolin, *Bibliographie des ouvrages concernant la tempérance* (Quebec: Imprimerie de "l'Événement," 1910), p. 20, quoting the Abbé Mailloux in "L'Ivrognerie, etc.," p. 110.

C. *Sagamité* was a porridge of hulled corn and sometimes meat, a common food among North American Indians.

D. This legend was retold by folklorist Marius Barbeau in substantially the same terms, as recounted to him by the old Huron of Jeune Lorette, Prudent Sioui. See "The Tree of Dreams," *Quebec: Where Ancient France Lingers* (Quebec: Librairie Garneau, 1936), pp. 128–144. The legend

possibly had its origin in a natural phenomenon, similar to the severe earthquake that occurred in February 1663, the effects of which are still visible at Les Éboulements on the North Shore, a few miles downriver from Quebec City. The Charlevoix area is noted for the most severe earthquakes in eastern Canada.

[E.] The four tribes of the Huron Confederacy (Bear, Rock, Cord, and Deer, an Iroquoian agricultural people speaking the same language as their foes, the Iroquois) numbered an estimated 30,000 when the French first began to colonize North America. First the Recollets, then the Jesuits penetrated Huronia — the latter leaving to posterity the epic *Jesuit Relations*. The Hurons had already established a farming and trading economy that widened to an empire once they became middlemen between the furtrapping northern Algonkian tribes and the beaver-hungry French. Huronia, centred in the Lake Simcoe-Georgian Bay area, was relentlessly destroyed by its Iroquois trading competitors from the south, who sought furs for the Dutch and English market. Even before this, however, the Huron's once-numerous population had been reduced to some 12,000 by smallpox and measles. Bruce G. Trigger, "The French Presence in Huronia: The Structure of Franco-Huron Relations in the First half of the Seventeenth Century," *The Canadian Historical Review*, 49 (1968): 107–141. Rousseau, Jacques, and George W. Brown, "The Indians of Northeastern North America", *Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Vol. 1 (1000–1700)* (University of Toronto Press, 1966), pp. 5–12.

[F.] Ohiaren8ak in *Divers*, 124.

General Wolfe's Statue

FOOTNOTES TO THE FIRST EDITION

1. Published in *Le Foyer canadien.* (Publisher's note). ["Le Statue de Général Wolfe," vol. 4 (1866), pp. 513–523.]

2. This niche was occupied by the statue of Saint Jean-Baptiste. It was placed immediately above the door within easy reach. Tradition has it that for this reason the citizens feared it might be removed and profaned after the fall of Quebec, and so it was taken to the Hôpital-Général, where it is still.

3. The following burial certificate, which I owe to the kindness of the Abbé Tanguay, shows beyond all doubt that Hyacinthe Cholet was only eight years old when Wolfe's statue was carved:

"Register [of the parish] of Saint-Nicolas, December 23, 1820, burial of Hyacinthe Cholet, carpenter, husband of Josephte Blondin, aged 57 years, etc."

I was in fact under the impression that he had died in this parish after 1818, at the home of his wife's son, Monsieur André Bezeau.

General Wolfe's Statue

TRANSLATOR'S ANNOTATIONS

A. In 1857, William Fraser married Wilhelmine-Anaïs Aubert de Gaspé (b. 1834), the author's twelfth child. Fraser was co-seigneur of Rivière-du-Loup. Pierre-Georges Roy, *Le Famille Aubert de Gaspé* (Lévis: Printed by J.E. Mercier, 1907), p. 170.

B. See *A Man of Sentiment: The Memoirs of Philippe-Joseph Aubert de Gaspé (1786–1871)*, pp. 130–153. The Cholet family name is given as Cholette in the memoirs, and Chaulette by James Thompson in the journal extract referred to in note G.

C. In a paper by P.-B. Casgrain read before the Royal Society of Canada in 1904, the existence of such a picture was discussed, as was the wooden statue of General Wolfe. Casgrain felt the statue was carved around 1779 or 1780, just prior to its installation in the niche on Wolfe's Corner, while de Gaspé's considers it to have been done before 1771, based on a remark by James Thompson.

Casgrain describes how one George Hips, thought to have come to Quebec with Wolfe's army, had a butcher shop until 1774 on the Rue Saint Jean near Wolfe's Corner. He became a burgess of the city, acquired the house with the empty niche on April 20, 1780 and installed the statue then, or possibly earlier. He died in the spring of 1781, and the house was sold by "judicial sale . . . without reservation . . . save . . . the statue of General Wolfe [as Hips had expressly stated in a notarial deed]." Thus began a tradition that lasted until the early 1900s, when C.F. Sise of Montreal, president of "the Bell Company" which then owned the building, presented it to the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec for safekeeping, and there "it has found a proper shelter and a final rest in the library" on the Rue Stanislas, where visitors may still see it in 1990. The original building was acquired in 1846 by "Messrs. François Évanturel and Isaac Dorion, two brothers-in-law." Along with an adjacent building, it was torn down and replaced with "new buildings

fronting the whole lots," still standing today. Dorion reinstalled the statue in a specially constructed third-storey niche on the same corner as before. Interestingly enough, during demolition Dorion found "a coloured engraving (14.3 x 10 ins.), corresponding exactly to the coloured statue, and as if intended to accompany it. This peculiar relic went afterwards to the late Honourable Frs. Évanturel, co-proprietor, and is now in the possession of his son, Colonel Evanturel, of this city, who has gathered from his father much interesting information about the effigy of General Wolfe.

"The origin and authenticity of this remarkable picture and engraving is apparent by the following engraved inscription thereon:

"From an original picture in the possession of Hery. Smith, Esq. —— Rich. Houston, Fecit.

MAJOR GENERAL JAMES WOLFE.

"*Commander* in *Chief* of His *Majesty's* Forces, on the Expedition against Quebec.

"Printed for J. Bowles & Son, in Cornhill, Eliz. Bakewell & Parker, opposite Birchin Lane, in Cornhill, J. Bowles, in St. Paul's Churchyard and Robert Sayer, at the Golden Back, in Fleet Street."

P.-B. Casgrain, "The Monument to Wolfe on the Plains of Abraham, and the Old Statue at 'Wolfe's Corner,' " offprint from *Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada*, second series (1904–1905), 10:2, pp. 215–222.

[D.] Assistant Commissary General James Thompson, a son of the Plains of Abraham veteran and military engineer, Sergeant James Thompson, was a member of the informal

"Club des Anciens" in Quebec City, and like de Gaspé, took a keen interest in unearthing, discussing, and recording historical details of olden-day Quebec.

E. "Mr. James Thompson, Sr., [1733–1830] was sergeant in the 78th (Fraser Highlanders), and served under Wolfe at Louisbourg and Quebec. He knew the General perfectly well, and used to speak of his kindness to all his men, and to him in particular, addressing them all in private as *'Brother soldier.'* When the Highlanders were disbanded, Mr. Thompson remained in Quebec, where he was employed in conducting divers military works. . . . Mr. Thompson lived on the opposite side of the street [from the Cholet brothers], at the south-east corner of Parlor and St. Louis Streets; the workshop of the sculptors being situate where Mr. Campbell's stables are now erected, 45–47 St. Louis Street." P.-B. Casgrain, "The Monument to Wolfe," p. 219, n. 1 and 3.

In 1828, "as last survivor of the battle on the Plains of Abraham," he was asked to help lay the foundation stone of the Wolfe and Montcalm monument in the garden of the Château Saint Louis. *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, 6:769.

F. "Thomas-Hyacinthe & Ives, carpenters, sons of Pierre Chaulette, shipwright. . . . They were merely wood-carvers, not sculptors of statuary. P.-B. Casgrain, "The Monument to Wolfe," p. 219, n. 2.

G. As quoted from "*Thompson MSS.*, vol. 1, p. 4" by P.-B. Casgrain in "The Monument to Wolfe," pp. 219–220. Formerly in the archives of the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec, "The Journal of Sergeant James Thomp-

son, 1758–1830" is presently housed in the Quebec Archives on the campus of Laval University in Quebec City.

H. The Abbé Henri-Raymond Casgrain (1831–1904) was a well-known historian, essayist, and biographer who encouraged and advised his kinsman, de Gaspé, in the latter's late blossoming literary career.

I. That is, Saintes. The Ile d'Oléron lies opposite La Rochelle, the Atlantic port that was the embarkation point for many French settlers bound for the New World.

Appendix

The following anecdote from de Gaspé's notes to chapter 6 of *Les Anciens Canadiens* is translated here for the first time. The reader, having been introduced to the Couillard household in "Woman of the Foxes," may enjoy this small bonus.

Several people have asked me whether my old pastor wasn't typical of a former curé of Saint-Thomas, who also baptized, married and buried three generations of parishioners. He was indeed the model that I had in mind when writing "Le Débâcle." I knew the respectable Monsieur Verreault well from my childhood until his death. He was a priest of tireless zeal, but as indulgent for others as he was hard on himself. He was a sociable man, and when in company dropped the stiff behaviour required of a priest in the course of his duties. On such occasions he became lively and amiable, giving himself up enthusiastically to the delights of conversation. However, the saintly man's good-hearted tolerance of society was sorely tried one day when supping with the local seigneur.

I have already said in an earlier note that Seigneur Couillard, father of my friend Doctor Couillard who was so well-known in the District of Quebec, was something of a pedant. He spoke Latin, English, and German as easily as his mother tongue. His memory was so prodigious that he would no doubt have been a distinguished linguist in

Europe, where he would have been able to study the languages of various foreign countries.

A regiment of German troops was stationed in Saint-Thomas. Monsicur Couillard got to know the officers, and within three months spoke German as well as they. He enjoyed using the language, and when his new friends departed was in despair at having no one to converse with in German.

On the very day of the aforementioned supper, he learned that a German doctor had arrived the previous evening and was planning to settle in Saint-Thomas. What luck! He recalled the pleasant times spent a few years earlier in the company of Doctor Oliva. This physician had married the seigneur's first cousin, and was distinguished as much for his wide literary learning as for his professional skill. No doubt all German doctors must be just like him. The seigneur called on the stranger forthwith, and was greeted with the greatest friendliness. They conversed in jaw-breaking German for two hours, and in the end Monsicur Couillard invited his new acquaintance for supper that same evening.

We were about to sit down to table when the new doctor arrived, half seas over as the English say — in other words, half drunk. The only French the unfortunate man appeared to have learned was a lexicon of all the oaths of Canadian guttersnipes, which he proceeded to recite with merciless gusto. The poor priest, seated between my mother and the mistress of the house, was unable to contain himself.

"*Dites donc un peu!*" he kept crying (this was a favourite phrase of his). "Gracious me, ladies! The good

Lord finds a man like that offensive!"

We were all appalled. Madame Couillard glared at her erudite husband, her baleful glance clearly saying, "Where did you pick up this animal?" Monsieur Couillard strove to turn the conversation entirely to German. This may have spared the curé's saintly ears, but the devil had his due all the same. Judging by the grimaces of Monsieur Couillard, a very pious man, the doctor must have sworn just as much in German as he had in French.

At last the seigneur did what he should have done in the first place: he whispered in a servant's ear, and in a few minutes we heard a vehicle stop in front of the manor door. In came a farm boy, looking rather flustered, to announce that he'd come to fetch the doctor for a dying woman. The Aesculapius made the most touching farewells. Being now completely drunk, he tearfully shook the hand of his generous host, clinging like a limpet for at least five minutes.

The venerable priest, greatly relieved to see this tiresome guest depart, cried, "Gracious me, my friends, how the good Lord is offended by that man!" Thereupon he recovered his good humour and abandoned the *schlinderlitche* to his unhappy fate.

Needless to say, as of that day all intercourse ceased between the good doctor and the polite society of the parish for the remainder of his stay.

A Selected List of Works Consulted

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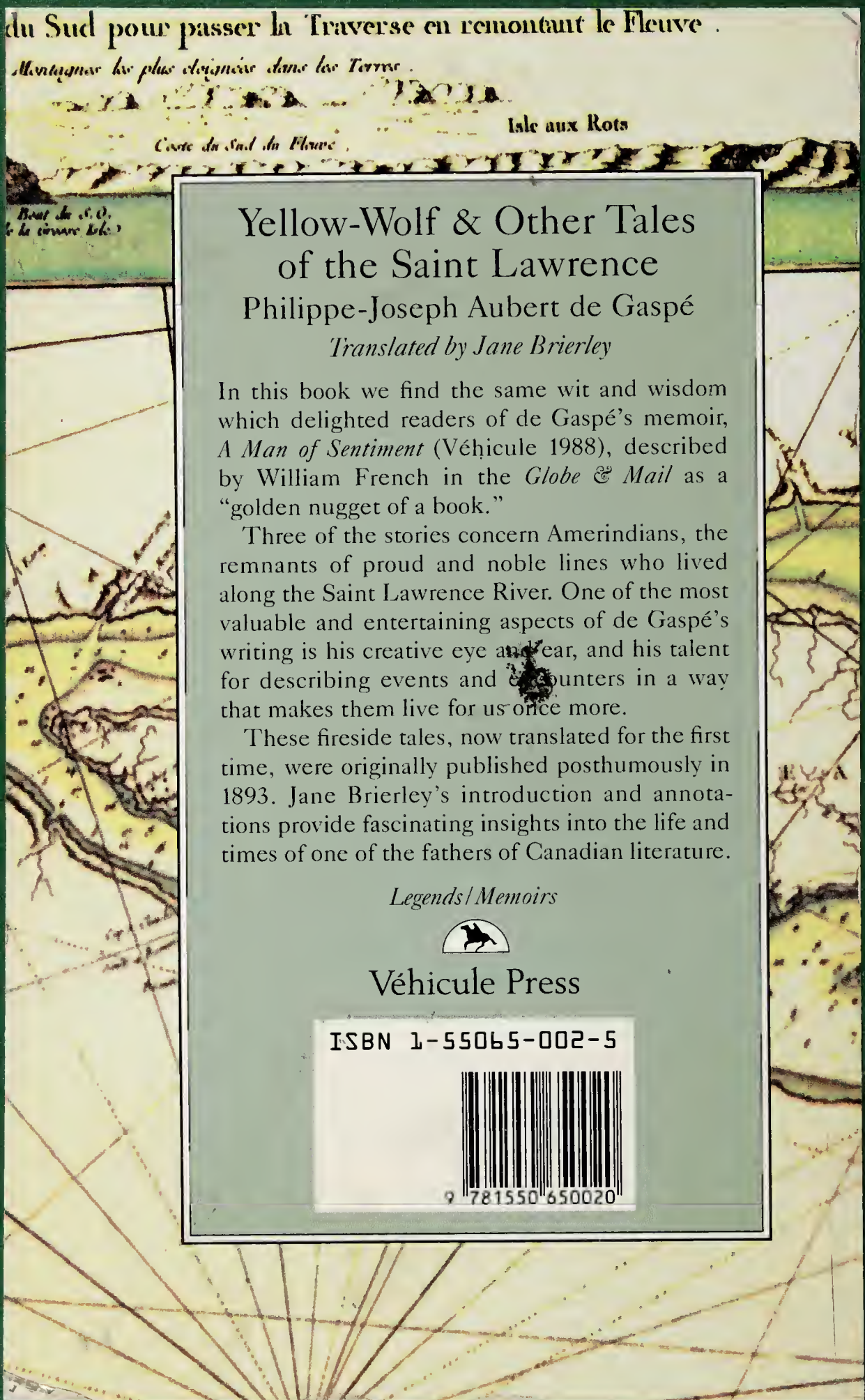
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